



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

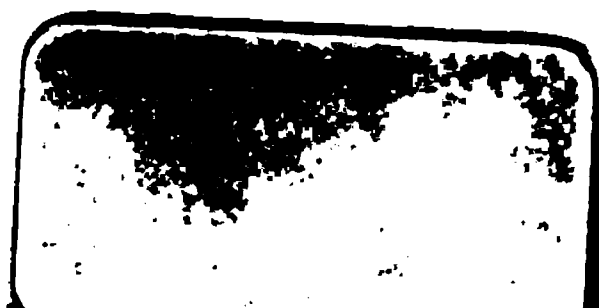
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





100



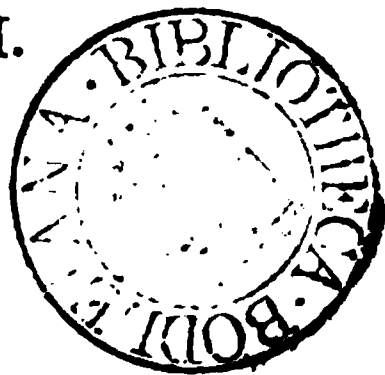
THE
BETROTHED LOVERS:

a
Milanese Story of the Seventeenth Century.

WITH
THE COLUMN OF INFAMY.

BY
ALESSANDRO MANZONI.

IN THREE VOLUMES.—VOL. I.



LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1845.

LONDON :
Printed by Manning and Mason, Ivy-lane, Paternoster-row.

INTRODUCTION.

"**HISTORIE** may bee truely defined as an illustrious warre waged aginst Time for snatching from his hands the Years his Prisoners, already become corpses; she brings them againe to life, passes them in review, and arranges them in line of Battle. But the illustrious Champions, who in this Arena reape a harvest of Palms and Laurels, bear off only the most magnificent and brilliant spoiles, embalming with their ink the enterprizes of Princes, Potentates, and high and mighty Personages, mingling with the fine needle of the minde threads of Golde and Silke, which forme a perpetual embroidery of glorious Actions. However, it is not easy for my weaknesse to elevate itselfe to such arguments and to such dangerous sublimities, losing myselfe in the Labyrinthe of Political Intrigues and amidst the noise of sounding Brasse. Simply having a knowledge of some memorable facts, although merely relating to people of the base classe and of little importance, I prepare to hande down to Posterity a Memorie of them, giving a sincere and ingenious recital or, may bee, relation. In which will bee seen, as in a narrow Play-house, mournful Tragedies of

horror and scenes of mighty wickednesse, with interludes of virtuous and angelick goodnesse opposed to diabolical operations. And truly considering that our climes are situate under the empyre of the Catholick King our Lorde, who is the Sunne which never sets, and that above them, with a reflected light, like that of the Moone, which never wanes, shines forth the Hero of a noble Race, which *pro tempore* sways all lands, and that the illustrious Senators who are fixed Starrs, and the other respectable Magistrates, who are wandering Planets, shed light everywhere, thus forming a most noble Heaven, one can finde no other cause, seeing it changed into a Hell of dark actions, of wickednesse, and of crime, which daring men multiply ever more, save diabolical artes and charmes, since human malice by itselfe would bee unable to resist so many Heroes, who, with the eyes of Argus and the arms of Briareus, laboured for the publick goode. Therefore, in describing the events which occurred in the Spring of my Life, although the greater number of those persons who play their parts in this Historie have already departed from the Scene of this World, rendering themselves Tributaries to the Fates, we shall, from proper Respect keep silence with regarde to their names—this is to saye, their parental names; and the same regarde will be observed towards places, merely indicating the Territories *generaliter*. No one will say that this is an

imperfection in the relation, or a deformity in my simple work, unlesse it bee some Critick who is abstaining from all Philosophical Food; for men, who are well versed in Philosophie, see clearly that the substance of the Narrative will lack nothing. For it is an evident thing, and not to bee denied, that names are but pure—the purest accidents ——”

But when I shall have had the heroic constancy to transcribe the history from this almost obliterated and illegible handwriting, when I shall have brought it to light, as people say, will there be any one found willing to endure the fatigue of reading it?

This reflection, arising from the labour of deciphering this scrawl, caused me to suspend my transcribing, and reflect more seriously upon what was proper to be done.—“It is true,” said I to myself, turning over the leaves of the manuscript, “it is true, that this hail of conceits and poetical images does not continue thus uninterruptedly throughout the entire work. The good Roccoco has wished in the beginning to shew his power; later in the course of the narrative, and sometimes for whole passages together, the style proceeds in a far more natural and simple manner. Yes; but then how vulgar he is! how unequal! how incorrect! Provincial idioms in abundance, phrases improperly applied, arbitrary grammatical constructions, halting periods. And then this sprinkling of Spanish elegance; and then

what is worse, in the most terrible or most affecting parts of the story, upon every occasion where the reader's surprise or thought should be excited, in all those passages, in short, which certainly require a little rhetoric, but a grave, refined, tasteful sort of rhetoric, the good man never fails to return to his early style. And then uniting with an admirable ability the most opposite qualities, he succeeds in being at once rough and affected, in the same page, in the same period, and even in the same word. He presents us with bombastic declamations, composed of vulgar solecisms, and with that ambitious dulness which is the striking characteristic of our writers of that age. In truth, it is no fit work to present to readers of the present day; they are become too malicious, and too much disgusted with this species of extravagance. It is happy for me that this thought has occurred to me at the commencement of the unfortunate work, and I will wash my hands of it."

In the very act of closing the old manuscript, so as to lay it aside, I felt grieved that so beautiful a history should remain entirely unknown; for as far as the history itself goes it might chance to appear equally beautiful to the reader—for as I say, it seemed to me beautiful, very beautiful. Why could one not, thought I, take the series of events from the manuscript, and improve the style?—no reasonable objection having presented itself, this resolution was immediately taken.

And this is the origin of the present work, explained with a sincerity equal to the importance of the work itself.

Certain facts, and certain customs described by our author, appeared to us so novel, so strange, not to say improbable, that before giving credence to them we wished to question other witnesses, and therefore commenced searching among the memoirs of those times to discover whether really the world were then such as our author describes. This research dissipated all our doubts; at every step we encountered something similar, perhaps even worse; but what decided us yet more was to meet again with certain personages, regarding whose existence we had been in doubt, having only heard them spoken of in the manuscript. Upon the proper occasions we will quote these testimonials, to induce our readers to believe things which, from their strange character, they would be tempted to deny.

But rejecting as intolerable the style of our author, what style have we to substitute? Here is the difficulty.

Whoever unrequested busies himself with repairing the work of another, exposes himself to the necessity of rendering an exact account of his own labours, and in a certain way contracts the obligation. This is a rule of right and reason from which we do not in the least desire to screen ourselves. Nay, even wishing to conform to it with a good grace, we had

proposed to render here a minute account of the mode of writing which we have employed; and with this object in view, during the whole of our labours, we have sought to divine all possible or probable criticisms with the intention of refuting them in anticipation. Neither would the difficulty have been here, since—our love of truth obliges us to confess—no criticism presented itself to our mind without bringing a triumphal answer along with it, one of those answers which we do not say solve the question, but change it. Often also opposing two criticisms, we caused them to combat one with the other; or examining them well, or comparing them attentively, we succeeded in discovering and proving that, opposed as they might seem in appearance, they were nevertheless of the same species, and both occasioned by a want of proper attention to the facts and principles upon which a judgment should be formed. There certainly never was a writer who could prove so clearly that he was right. But what? when we were about to arrange all these objections and replies in some order, alas! we found ourselves on the point of writing another book. Perceiving this, we banished the idea, from two reasons, which the reader will certainly find conclusive: the first, because a book written to justify another, or rather the style of another, might appear ridiculous; the second, because one book at a time is enough, especially when the book is not a profitable one.

THE BETROTHED.

CHAPTER I.

THAT branch of the lake of Como which flows towards the south between two uninterrupted chains of mountains, full of creeks and bays, according to their advance and retreat, compresses itself almost at once, and takes the course and form of a river, between a promontory on the one hand, and a wide coast on the other; and the bridge which here connects the two shores, appears to render this transformation still more sensible to the eye, and marks the point where the lake ceases and the Adda recommences to take again the name of the lake, where the shores stretching out anew allow the water to extend and develop itself in new gulfs and bays. The shore formed from the deposit of these great torrents, ascends, supported by two contiguous mountains, one called San Martino, the other, in the dialect of Lombardy, *il Resegone*, from its many summits in a line, which, in truth, make it resemble a saw, so that one seeing it for the first time, provided this were from the front, as, for example, from the ramparts of Milan on the northern side, would recognise immediately by this denomi-

nation, this long and vast ridge, from among the other mountains, of names more obscure and forms more common. For a considerable distance the coast descends with a gentle and continuous declivity, then breaks itself into hills and dales, descents and levels, according to the formation of the two mountains and the work of the waters. The extreme edge, torn by the mouths of the torrents, is scarcely anything but sand and pebbles; the rest fields and vineyards, scattered over with hamlets, towns, and villages; and in some parts are woods, which stretch themselves up the mountains. Lecco, the principal of these hamlets, and the one which gives its name to the territory, lies not far distant from the bridge on the shore of the lake, and even finds itself partly in the lake when the waters increase; it is at the present day a large village, and seems in a fair way to become a town. At the time the events occurred which we undertake to relate, this village, already important, was moreover a fortress, and therefore had the honour of lodging a commandant, and the advantage of possessing a stationary garrison of Spanish soldiers, who taught the girls and the women of the country modesty, who, from time to time, saluted the shoulders of some husband or father, and who, at the end of summer, never failed to employ themselves in the vineyards, thinning the grapes, and relieving the peasants of the fatigues of the vintage. From one to the other of these hamlets, from the heights to the shores, from hill to hill, ran and yet run roads and by-roads, more or less steep or level; some very deep, buried between two walls, whence, raising your eyes, you only perceive a piece of sky and some mountain

summit; others elevated upon open terraces; and here the eye wanders over prospects more or less extensive, but always rich and always new, according as the different points take in more or less of the vast surrounding scene, and according as this or that part of the landscape foreshortens itself, stands forth, or disappears by turns. Here one picturesque bit, there another; here a long extent of this vast and varied mirror of water. On this hand the lake shut in at the extremity, or rather losing itself among the windings of a group of mountains, and then gradually extending itself among others, which present themselves, one by one, to the view, reflected in the water upside-down, with lovely landscapes upon the shores. Here the arm of the river, there the lake; then again the river, losing itself in lucid windings between two chains of mountains, which accompany it, fade away in the distance, and lose themselves in the horizon. The place itself, whence you contemplate these varied visions, presents every where wonders and beauties; the mountain, whose side you traverse, unfolds itself above and around; its summit and cliffs, distinct and erect, change at every step, opening and forming into many peaks that which at first had appeared only one, and present that effect in mountain tops which we have just observed in the shores; the soft and domestic character of the mountain slopes tempers gradually what is savage, and adorns still more the magnificence of the other scenes.

By one of these pathways returned home very leisurely from a walk, on the evening of the 7th of November of the year 1628, Don Abbondio, curate

of one of the above-mentioned hamlets. Neither the name of this hamlet, nor the surname of this personage, is to be found in the manuscript, either in this place or elsewhere. He repeated tranquilly the divine service, and each time between one psalm and another closed his breviary, keeping in it as a mark the first finger of his left hand, and placing then the right hand behind him, pursued his way, gazing on the ground, and kicking with his foot towards the wall the pebbles which obstructed the path. Now he raised his head, and casting his eyes idly around him, fixed them on that part of a mountain which the light of the already sunken sun, escaping through the clefts of the opposite chain of hills, had coloured here and there with unequal streaks of purple. Now he again opened the breviary, and reciting another passage, arrived at a turn of the road where he was always accustomed to raise his eyes from the book and look around him, — on this day he did as usual. After this turn, the road ran straight forwards, perhaps sixty paces, and then divided itself into two little paths, in the form of a Y: the one to the right ascended towards the mountain, and led to the curacy; the other descended into the valley until it reached a torrent; at this part the wall did not reach above the waist of the passer-by. The inner walls of these two pathways, instead of uniting at the angle, terminated in a little chapel, upon which were depicted certain long, winding figures, terminating in points, which, according to the intention of the artist, to the eyes of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood should represent flames; and, alternating with these flames, certain other figures impos-

sible to describe, which should be souls in purgatory; souls and flames brick colour, upon a greyish ground, with plaster here and there. The curate took this road, and directing his looks as usual towards the little chapel, saw something he did not expect, and most certainly would not have wished to see. Two men stood, one opposite the other, at the confluence, so to say, of the two paths; one of them astride upon the low wall, one leg dangling outwards, the other placed on the road; his companion stood leaning against the wall, with his arms crossed upon his breast. Their dress, their deportment, and what the curate could perceive of their appearance from the spot where he had arrived, left no doubt regarding their condition. They had each of them round their heads a little green net, which fell back upon the left shoulder, and terminated in a large tassel; out of this net protruded upon the forehead an enormous tuft of hair. A large moustache curling in points, a shining leathern girdle to which were attached two pistols, a little horn full of powder hanging upon the breast like a necklace, the handle of an immense knife peeping forth from the pocket of the ample and full breeches, and a large sword, with a heavy handle richly open-worked with plates of brass, polished and bright, made them known as individuals of the class of *braves*. /,

This class, now entirely lost, was then very flourishing in Lombardy, and already very ancient. For those who have no idea of this class, here are some authentic sketches, which will be able to give a sufficiently good one of its principal characteristics, of the endeavours made to destroy it, and of its audacious existence.

On the 8th of April 1583, the very illustrious and excellent Signor don Carlo of Arragon, Prince of Castelvetro, Duke of Terranuovo, Marquis of Avola, Count of Burgeto, Grand-Admiral and Grand-Constable of Sicily, Governor of Milan, and Captain-General of His Catholic Majesty in Italy, “fully informed of the intolerable misery in which the city of Milan has lived, and still lives, by reason of bravoos and vagabonds,” publishes a proclamation against them. “He proclaims and defines all those to be included in this proclamation, and liable to be imprisoned as bravoos and vagabonds, who, being foreigners, or belonging to the country, have no occupation, or, having one, do not employ themselves therewith, but without a salary, or with one, depend upon some cavalier or gentleman, officer or merchant, to aid and favour him, or really, as may be presumed, to do injury to others.” To all these he orders, that within the term of six days they shall remove themselves out of the country, intimates the galleys to the stubborn, and gives to the officers of justice the most ample and unlimited power for the execution of these orders. But in the following year, April the 12th, this Signor, “seeing that the city is still full of the said bravoos, returned to live as they lived at first, their customs not in the least changed, nor their numbers diminished,” puts forth another proclamation still more vigorous and worthy of notice, in which, among other ordinances, he prescribes—

“That whatsoever person, either of this city, or a foreigner, who by two witnesses shall be believed and commonly reputed a bravo, and bear this name, even although he shall have done offence to no one,

for this sole reputation of bravo, without other proof, may, by the aforesaid judges, or by any one of them, be delivered over to the rack and torture, in order to procure information; and still not confessing himself guilty of any crime, may be sent to the galleys for the space of three years, for the sole reputation and name of bravo as above." All this, and still more before the end, "since his Excellence is resolved to make himself obeyed by every one."

Hearing from so great a lord, words thus bold and confident, accompanied by such orders, one is tempted to believe, that alone at their very sound, all the bravoës have disappeared for ever. But the testimony of a lord, not less to be credited, nor less endowed with names, obliges us to believe to the contrary. This is the very illustrious and excellent Signor Juan Fernandez de Velasco, Constable of Castile, Grand-Chamberlain to his Majesty, Duke of the town of Frias, Count of Flaro and of Castelnovo, Signor of the house of Velasco, and of the Seven Infants of Lara, Governor of the State of Milan, etc. On the 5th of June 1593, he also, fully informed of how much misery and ruin is occasioned by these bravoës and vagabonds, and of the very great evil done by this kind of people to the public good, in despite of justice, intimates to them again, that within the term of six days they have to quit the country, and repeating very nearly the same ordinances, and the same menaces as his predecessor. Then the 23d of May 1598, being informed with no small grief, that in this city, each day, the number of these same bravoës and vagabonds continues to increase, and that nothing is heard of them, either day or night, *but* relations of

premeditated assassinations, homicides, robberies, and all other manners of crime: this being rendered all the more easy, through the bravoos being confident of the assistance of their superiors and protectors,—prescribes again the same remedy; increasing the dose, as is customary in obstinate disorders. “Every one, therefore,” he then concludes, “shall guard himself from infringing in the slightest degree the present proclamation, otherwise instead of experiencing the clemency of his Excellence, he will experience his rigour and anger, he being resolved and determined that this shall be a last, and enduring admonition.” But the very illustrious and excellent Signor don Pietro Enriquez de Ecevedo, Count di Fuentes, Captain and Governor of the State of Milan, was not of this opinion; he was not of this opinion, and that for very good reasons. *Being fully informed of the misery in which the city and state of Milan exists, by reason of the number of bravoos which there abounds, he is determined totally to exterminate this most pernicious race,* and publishes, on the 5th December 1600, a new proclamation, full also of the most severe measures, *with the firm intention that they shall, with every rigour, and without the hope of remission, be fully put in execution.* One is led to believe, however, that in this again he did not apply himself with the same good will, which he knew how to make use of in planning a cabal, or in exciting enemies against his great enemy Henry IV.; since upon this point, history attests to his success in arming against the Duke of Savoy, whom he caused to lose more than one city, and to his success also in exciting the Duke di Biron to join in a conspiracy, whom he caused to lose his head; but what concerns this most pernicious race of bravoos,

certain it is that it still continued to increase to the 22d of September 1612, on which day the very illustrious and excellent Signor don Giovannide Mendoza, Marquis de la Hynojosa, gentleman, etc., governor, etc., thought seriously about extirpating it. To this effect he sent to Pandolfo and Marco Tullio Malatesti, royal printers, the customary proclamation, corrected and enlarged, in order that it should be printed for the extermination of the bravoos. But these still lived on to receive the 24th of December, of the year 1618, the same and still stronger blows from the very illustrious and excellent Signor Don Gomez Suarez de Figueroa, Duke de Feria, etc., governor, etc. However, they still not being dead, the illustrious and excellent Signor Gonzalo Fernandez di Cordova, under whose government the walk of Don Abbondio took place, had found himself obliged to recorrect and republish the customary proclamation against the bravoos, the 5th of October 1627; that is, a year, a month, and a day, before this memorable event which we relate.

Neither was this the last publication; but we do not believe ourselves bound to mention the later ones. We will only hint that on the 15th February 1632, in which year the very illustrious and excellent Signor the Duke of Feria was for the second time governor; he informs us that *the greatest acts of wickedness proceed from those called bravoos*. This assures us sufficiently that in the time of which we treat there were bravoos everywhere.

That the two described above, stood here expecting some one, was a thing very evident; but what most displeased Don Abbondio was his being led to perceive

by certain actions that the expected one was himself. Since, when he appeared, these two glanced at each other, raising their heads with a movement, which shewed that both exclaimed, "It is he." The one who was astride, rose, placing one leg upon the road; the other moved away from the wall, and both came towards him. He, still holding his breviary open, as though he read, glanced over it, to watch the motions of these two, and seeing them come directly towards him, was assailed at once with a thousand thoughts. He quickly questioned himself in great fear, as to whether between himself and the bravoës there were at the right or the left any outlet from the road, and as quickly recollected that there was none. He then made a rapid examination as to whether he had sinned against any powerful or vindictive noble; but still, in the midst of this tumult, the consoling testimony of his conscience reassured him somewhat. The bravoës, however, advanced towards him, their eyes fixed upon him. He placed the first and second finger of his left hand in his collar, as though he would arrange it, and moving the two fingers round the collar, turned at the same time his face over his shoulder, twisting his mouth about, and glancing with the corner of his eye to see whether any one arrived. But he saw no one. He gave a glance over the little wall into the fields,—no one;—another more modest one on to the road before him; no one, except the bravoës. What was to be done? Turn back? For that there was no time. Run away? That was the same as to say follow me, or worse. Not being able to escape the danger, he rushed to meet it, since the moments of this uncertainty were

so painful to him that he desired only to shorten them. He hastened his step, recited a little verse with a louder voice, composed his countenance to as much quietness and hilarity as he could, and made every effort to prepare a smile. When he found himself in front of these two gentlemen, he said mentally, "here we are," and stood still. "Signor Curato," said one of these two, fixing his eyes upon him.

"What do you command?" replied immediately Don Abbondio, raising his eyes from the book, which rested open in his hands as upon a desk.

"You have the intention," pursued the Bravo, with the menacing and angry manner of one who surprises an inferior in a villanous undertaking, "you have the intention of marrying to-morrow Renzo Tramaglino and Lucia Mondella!"

"That is to say"—— answered Don Abbondio, with a tremulous voice; "that is to say—— you gentlemen are men of the world, and know very well how these things are managed. The poor curate does not enter into the business. They lay their plans among themselves, and then——and then they come to us as they would go to a bank,——and we, we are every one's servants."

"Well," said the Bravo in his ear, with a solemn tone of command, "this marriage is not to take place, neither to-morrow, nor ever."

"But, my good gentlemen," replied Don Abbondio with a meek and gentle voice, as though he would persuade an impatient listener, "but, my good gentlemen, only deign to place yourselves in my shoes. If the thing depended upon me—you see very well that nothing falls into my pocket ——"

“Come,” interrupted the Bravo, “if the thing were to be decided by gossip, you would have the best of the argument. We don’t know anything of it, neither do we wish to know more. A man who is warned—you understand us.”

“But you, gentlemen, are too just, too reasonable——”

“But,” interrupted this time the other companion, who until now had said nothing; “but the marriage is not to take place, or”—and here a terrible oath—“or he who performs the marriage will never repent it,—because he will not have time, and,” here another oath.

“Hush, hush!” replied the first orator, “the Signor Curato is a man who knows the ways of the world; and we are gentlemen, who do not wish to do him any harm, provided he will have judgment. Signor Curato, the very illustrious Signor Don Rodrigo, our patron, greets you most cordially.”

This name was to the mind of Don Abbondio like a lamp, which in a tempestuous night for a moment illuminates confusedly the surrounding objects, increasing the horror. He made, as by instinct, a low bow, and said, “If you knew how to suggest to me——”

“O, to suggest to you, who know Latin!” interrupted the Bravo again, with a laugh between the awkward and the ferocious. “That concerns you, and above all, don’t let one word escape you regarding the advice we have given you for your own good; otherwise—hem—it will be the same as performing the marriage. Well, what do you wish we should say in your name, to the illustrious Signor, our master?”

"My respects."

"Explain yourself better?"

"I am disposed—disposed always to obedience;" and in proffering these words, he did not know whether he made a promise or merely a compliment. The Bravos received this message, and appeared to take it in its most serious signification.

"Well, good night to you, Signor Curato," said one of them, in the act of departing with his companion.

Don Abbondio, who a few moments before would have give an eye to have escaped them, would now have liked to prolong the conversation and the transaction. "Gentlemen," he began, closing the book with both hands,—but they, without listening longer to him, took the path by which he had arrived, and walked away singing a song, which we will not transcribe. Poor Don Abbondio remained some moments with his mouth open, like one enchanted; then took that one of the little roads which led to his house, dragging with difficulty one leg after the other, for his poor legs appeared benumbed. How it was with him internally will be better understood when we have said something of his character, and of the times in which he lived.

Don Abbondio (as the reader has already perceived) was not born with the heart of a lion. But from his earliest years he had been forced to comprehend that the very worst condition in those times was that of an animal without claws and without teeth, but which, nevertheless, feels no inclination to be devoured. The legal power did not in any instance protect the quiet and inoffensive man who had no

means of causing fear to others. Not that laws and punishments for private violence were wanting. There was a deluge of laws; crimes were enumerated and particularised with the most minute tediousness; punishments were foolishly extravagant; and if they were not sufficient, might be augmented by the arbitrary will of the legislator himself, or by the hundred other ministers of the law. The law proceedings studied only to free the judge from every thing which might be an impediment to him in pronouncing a sentence of condemnation. The sketches which we have extracted from the laws against the bravoës give a slight but faithful example of this. With this, or in great measure caused by this, these proclamations, republished and recorrected by each succeeding governor, served only to attest most amply to the impotence of their authors; or if they produced any immediate effect, it was principally to add to the many torments which the weak and peaceful already suffered from these disturbers, and to increase their violence and cunning. Impunity was organised, and had roots which the laws could neither touch nor move. Such were the asylums, such the privileges of each individual class, in part recognised by the law, in part tolerated in envious silence or attacked by vain protests; but sustained, in fact, and defended by these classes themselves, with the activity of interest and the jealousy of punctilio. Now, this impunity, menaced and insulted by these proclamations, must naturally at each menace and each insult make use of fresh strength and fresh inventions in order to preserve itself. This happened in effect; and at the appearance of proclamations

intended to restrain these violences, they sought, in their real strength, new means more opportune for continuing to do that which these proclamations wished to prohibit. They could fetter at every step and molest the innocent man, who was without power of his own and without protection, since, in order to prevent or punish every offence, each man was under their power, and the actions of every private individual were subjected to the arbitrary will of every description of law-officer. But he who before committing a crime took means to shelter himself in a convent or in a palace, where the officers of justice would never dare to set foot,—or he who without any other protection than a livery which engaged the vanity and interest of a powerful family to defend a whole caste, was free in his operations, and could laugh at all this noise of proclamations. Of those even who were deputed to put these laws into execution, some belonged by birth to the privileged classes, others depended upon patronage; all of them, by education, by interest, by habit, by imitation, had embraced these maxims, and would have taken great care not to offend against them merely through love to a bit of paper pasted up on the corners of the streets. If the men charged with the execution of these proclamations had been enterprising as heroes, obedient as monks, and as ready to sacrifice themselves as martyrs, they would not have been able to accomplish their purpose, inferior as they were in numbers to those who were to be subdued, and with the great probability of being abandoned by those who, in abstract, and, so to say, in theory, had imposed this work upon them. But, besides this, these were

generally the vilest wretches of their time; their office was despised even by those to whom it should have inspired terror, and their title was a reproach. It was, therefore, very natural that these wretches, instead of risking their lives in a desperate undertaking, should sell their inaction and connivance to the powerful, and reserve the execution of the detestable authority and power which they possessed for those occasions where there was no danger, that is, when they could oppress and torment peaceable men who were without means of defence.

The man who wishes to injure, or who fears every moment to be himself injured, seeks naturally allies and companions. Hence, in those times the tendency of individuals to keep themselves knit together in classes, to form new associations, and to strive each one to increase the power of that particular class to which he belonged, was carried to the very greatest extent. The clergy sought to extend and sustain their immunities, the nobles their privileges, the military their exemptions. The merchants and artizans were enrolled in guilds and brotherhoods, the lawyers formed an alliance, the physicians even a corporation. Each one of these little oligarchies had its own peculiar power; in each one the individual found the advantage of employing for himself, in proportion to his authority or his cleverness, the united strength of the many. The more honest availed themselves of this advantage for defence only, the crafty and villanous made use of it to assist their wicked purposes, for which their own private means would not have sufficed, and to insure to themselves thereby, impunity. The strength, however, of these

various alliances was very unequal; and particularly in the country, the rich and violent noble, surrounded by a troop of braves and a population of peasantry, accustomed by family tradition, or obliged, to consider themselves as subjects or soldiers of the master, exercised a power which it would have been difficult for any alliance to resist.

Our Abbondio, neither noble nor rich, still less courageous, had perceived himself, ever since his arrival at years of discretion, to be in this society, like an earthen vessel constrained to travel in company with many vessels of iron. He had, therefore, with sufficient willingness obeyed his parents, who wished him to become a priest. To say the truth, he had never reflected very seriously upon the obligations and noble object of the ministry to which he dedicated himself. To procure for himself the means of living quietly, to place himself in a revered and powerful class, appeared to him two reasons more than sufficient for such a choice. But, however powerful the class may be, it does not protect the individual, does not preserve him from danger beyond a certain point; no one dispensed with forming for himself a particular system of defence. Don Abbondio, absorbed continually in thoughts regarding his own quiet, did not trouble himself much about those advantages for the obtaining of which it would be necessary to exert himself, and to be rather bold. His system consisted principally in avoiding all quarrels, and in yielding to those which he could not avoid, in unarmed neutrality, in all the wars which raged around him, in the contests then very frequent between the clergy and the secular power, between

the military and the civil power, between noble and noble, nay, even in the disputes between two peasants, given rise to by a word, and decided by their fists or their knives. If he found himself absolutely obliged to take part between two combatants, he always stood by the strongest; always, however, in the rear, and always took care to make the other perceive that he was not voluntarily his enemy, seeming to say, But why have you not managed to be the strongest, so that I might have placed myself on your side? Holding himself aloof from the powerful, appearing not to notice their capricious and wanton insults, bearing with submission those which were of a more serious intention, and forcing, by dint of bows and cheerful respect, even the most surly and disdainful to smile upon him when they met upon the road, the poor man had succeeded in passing through sixty years without great tempests.

Not but that he had also his portion of gall and bitterness: this continual exercise of patience, this giving up of his will to others, these many bitter mouthfuls swallowed in silence, had irritated him to such a pitch, that had he not been able from time to time to relieve himself, his health would certainly have suffered. But still there were in the world, and near him too, persons whom he knew very well were quite unable to molest him, and upon these he would sometimes wreak his long repressed ill-humour, and satisfy himself by being a little fanciful, and scolding in the wrong. He was a rigid censor of those who did not conduct themselves in the same manner as he did, provided this censure could be exercised without even the most distant personal

danger. With him the one who remained vanquished was always at least an imprudent fellow; the one who was assassinated, a busybody. Did any one maintaining his rights against a powerful man, remain with a broken head, Don Abbondio always knew how to prove that he had been in the wrong; a thing not very difficult, since right and wrong are not divided by so fine a line that to either party belongs exclusively either the one or the other. But above every thing else, he declaimed against those of his brethren who, to their own personal danger, took part with an oppressed poor man against a powerful oppressor. This he called buying trouble with ready money, trying to make dogs' legs straight. He said also very severely, that he was a medler in profane matters, very prejudicial to the dignity of the sacred ministry. And against these he preached,—always, however, in a *tête-à-tête*, or in a very small company, with so much the more vehemence as his auditors were known to be unfavourable to the resenting of injuries which regarded themselves personally. He had a favourite sentence, with which he always closed his discourses upon this subject, which was, “that such rude encounters never happened to a gentleman who took care of himself, and who was contented with his condition.” Consider, my five-and-twenty readers, what impression the circumstances we have related must have made upon the mind of this poor creature! The fright of these terrible visages and terrible words, the menace of a signor noted for never menacing in vain, a system of quiet existence which had cost so many years of study and patience, destroyed at one blow! And a step taken,

from which he could see no means of escape. All these thoughts buzzed tumultuously in the shallow brain of Don Abbondio. If Renzo could be sent away with a quiet no; but then he will want reasons—and what in the name of heaven have I to answer him? And, and, and he has such a spirit! A lamb, if you don't meddle with him, but if you will contradict him—— ah! Then he has quite lost his head about this Lucia, he is in love like—— Foolish young people, who not knowing what to do, fall in love, and wishing to marry, never trouble themselves about all the vexation they occasion a poor gentleman. Ah, poor unfortunate that I am! Why should these ugly faces just place themselves in my path, and seize upon me? What have I to do with this? Is it I who wish to marry? Why did they not sooner go and speak—— Oh, only see what a fine destiny is mine, the right thing never comes into my mind until a moment after it is wanted! If I had only thought of suggesting to them to carry their embassy—— But at this point he perceived that to repent of not having been counsellor and co-operator in this wickedness was a thing very sinful, and he turned the anger of his thoughts against him who was thus come to disturb his peace. He did not know Don Rodrigo, except by sight and fame; neither had he ever had anything to do with him, beyond touching his breast with his chin, and the earth with the point of his hat, the few times they had happened to meet on the road. He had chanced on more than one occasion to defend the reputation of the Signor against those who in a low voice, sighing and raising their eyes towards heaven, cursed some of his deeds.

He had said a thousand times, "he was an honourable cavalier." But in this moment he conferred upon him, in his heart, all those titles which he had never heard applied to him by others without interrupting them in haste, with a "fie on't!"

Arrived in the tumult of these thoughts at the door of his house, which stood at the further end of the village, he put, in haste, the key which he already held in his hand, into the key-hole, opened the door, entered, closed it carefully behind him, and anxious to find himself in confidential company, called quietly, "Perpetua, Perpetua!" advancing then towards the little parlour where this personage ought certainly to be, preparing the table for supper. Perpetua was, as every one perceives, the servant of Don Abbondio; an affectionate and faithful creature, who knew how to obey and command according as occasion served; tolerating now the grumbling and whims of her master, now making him tolerate her own, which became every day more frequent, since she had passed the synodal age of forty and still remained single, having refused every offer of marriage which had been made her, as she said, or never having found a dog who could fancy her, as her friends said.

"I am coming," she answered, placing at its accustomed spot on the table, a small flask of Don Abbondio's favourite wine, and then moving away very slowly; but she had not yet reached the threshold of the little parlour, when her master entered, with so constrained a step, so gloomy an air, so distorted a countenance, that no one would have required the experienced eyes of Perpetua to perceive at the first glance that something truly extraordinary had happened to him.

“Mercy! what is the matter with my master?”

“Nothing, nothing;” returned Don Abbondio, letting himself sink panting into his great chair.

“How, nothing! you wish to make me believe that,—gloomy as you are? Some great accident has happened.”

“Oh, for the love of heaven! When I say nothing, it is either nothing, or something which I cannot tell you.”

“Which you cannot tell even to me? Who then will take care of your health? Who then will give you counsel?”

“Ah, alas! be silent; and don’t prepare anything more for me for supper. Give me a glass of my wine.”

“And yet you will maintain that nothing is the matter with you!” said Perpetua, filling the glass, and then holding it in her hand as though she would only give it him as a reward for the confidence which was so much expected.

“Give it here, give it here,” said Don Abbondio, taking the glass from her with no steady hand, and then swallowing its contents in haste, as though this were a dose of medicine.

“You wish then to see me obliged to demand what has happened to my master?” said Perpetua, who stood straight before him, her arms a-kimbo, regarding him fixedly, as though she would suck his secret out of his eyes.

“For the love of heaven, do not gossip so! Do not make such an uproar. Life, life is at stake.”

“Life?”

“Life!”

"You know very well that every time you have told me anything in confidence, I have never ——"

"How, how? when?"

Perpetua observed she had touched a wrong note, when changing quickly her tone, "Signor," she said, with a voice of emotion, and which was intended to move him, "I have always been full of affection towards you, and if now I desire to know this, it is through eagerness to assist you, to give you counsel, to comfort your mind ——"

The fact is, that Don Abbondio had perhaps as strong a desire to unburden himself of his secret as Perpetua had to know it, since after having resisted each time more weakly the new and still more persecuting assaults of Perpetua, after having made her swear, more than once, never to breathe a word concerning the matter, finally, with many delays, and with many an 'alas!' he related the miserable affair. When he arrived at the terrible name of the signor who sent the message, it was necessary that Perpetua should bind herself to a new and still more solemn oath; and Don Abbondio pronouncing this name, threw himself back in his chair with a great sigh, raising his hands, in an attitude of command, and yet at the same time of supplication, said, "for the love of heaven!"

"Mercy!" exclaimed Perpetua; "oh, the villain! the cunning one! Oh, what a man without the fear of God!"

"Will you be silent? or will you completely ruin me?"

"Oh! we are here where no one can hear us. But what will you do with Signor Padrone?"

“Only see,” said Don Abbondio, with an angry voice, “only see the fine counsel which this creature can give me. She comes to me and asks me, ‘what shall I do—what shall I do?’ It might be she who was in a difficulty, and I the one to help her out of it!”

“But I certainly should like to give you my poor counsel, but then ——”

“But then let us hear.”

“My poor counsel would be, that as every one says our Archbishop is a holy man, and a man of power, and that he fears no one, and is quite delighted when he can make one of these powerful nobles keep to his duty, in order to assist a curate, I should say, and I say that you ought to write a beautiful letter to him, to inform him how ——”

“Will you be silent, will you be silent? Are such counsels to be given to a wretched man? When I shall feel a musket-ball in my back—God help me—will the Archbishop remove it?”

“Ah, musket-balls! no, they do not disappear like comfits; and woe to us if their dogs should bite every time they bark! I have always seen that respect is shewn to him who can shew his teeth, and make himself thought of; and precisely because you will never speak out your opinion, we are brought to such a pass that every one comes licensed to ——”

“Will you be silent?”

“I am silent; but it is however certain, that when the world perceives a person always, on every occasion, ready to give way ——”

“Will you be silent? Is this a time for such nonsense?”

"Enough: you will think of this to-night; but in the mean time do not begin to injure yourself by ruining your health; eat a mouthful."

"I will think of this," muttered Don Abbondio, "certainly, I will think of this, and here I have something to think about." He rose, continuing, "I will take nothing, nothing; I have other things to occupy me. I also know it concerns me to think about this; but why must it happen precisely to me?"

"Swallow at least this other drop," said Perpetua, pouring out some wine, "you know it always does your stomach good."

"I require something else, something else, something else." Thus saying, and still muttering, "a small trifle to a gentleman like me; how will it be to-morrow!" and, with similar lamentations, prepared to ascend to his chamber. Arrived at the threshold, he turned round towards Perpetua, placed his finger upon his lips, and saying, in a slow and solemn tone, "for the love of heaven!" disappeared.

CHAPTER II.

It is related, that the Prince of Condé slept profoundly the night before the battle of Rocroi; but in the first place he was much fatigued, and in the second he had given all the necessary directions, and decreed every thing that should take place the next morning. Don Abbondio, instead, only knew as yet that the morrow should be the day of battle; therefore a great part of the night was spent in consultations full of anguish. Not to pay any attention to this wicked intimation, neither to the menace, and to solemnize the marriage, was a line of conduct which he would not even put into deliberation. To confide to Renzo this occurrence, and seek with him some other means—God help us! “Let not a word escape—otherwise—*hem!*” had said one of the bravoës; and hearing this *hem* echo in his mind, Don Abbondio, who could not think of transgressing such a law, repented of having gossiped with Perpetua. Should he fly? But where? And then how many difficulties, how many reasons to be given! At every line of conduct which he rejected, the poor man turned himself round in his bed. The one which appeared to him the best, or the least evil one, was to gain time by delaying Renzo. He remembered, fortunately, that it wanted but a few days of the time when marriages are prohibited; “and if I could only keep this youth

at bay for these few days," thought he, "I should then have two months of repose, and two months may give birth to great things. He thought over excuses to propose; and although they might appear to him rather frivolous, still he reassured himself with the thought that his authority would make them appear weighty enough, and that his great experience would give him a decided advantage over an ignorant youth. "We shall see," said he to himself; "he thinks of his mistress, I think of my life; I am the one most interested, let alone that I am the most prudent. My dear son, if thou shouldst feel the fire on thy back, I should not know what to say, but I do not intend to be the victim." Having thus, at length, somewhat quieted his mind with this deliberation, he could close his eyes—but what sleep, what dreams! Bravoes, Don Rodrigo, Renzo, pathways, rocks, escapes, pursuits, cries, musket-shots!!

The first awakening after a misfortune and in an embarrassment is a very bitter moment; the mind, scarcely aroused to consciousness, returns to the habitual ideas of the tranquil preceding life, but the thoughts of the present state of affairs soon, however, present themselves most unceremoniously; and the pain thus occasioned is still more lively in this instantaneous comparison.

Don Abbondio, having most bitterly experienced this moment, ran over in his mind his designs of the night, strengthened himself in them, arranged them better, rose and waited expecting Lorenzo, now with fear, now with impatience.

Lorenzo, or as every one called him Renzo, did not cause himself long to be waited for. Scarcely had

•

●

the hour arrived, when without indiscretion he could present himself before the curate, than he flew to him with all the gay impetuosity of a man of twenty, who on that day is to espouse the one he loves. He had lost his parents in his earliest youth, and exercised the profession of a silk-weaver, hereditary, so to say, in his family. It was a profession which in former years had been very lucrative, but now was in decay, not, however, so much so, but that an able workman could still earn enough wherewith to live honestly. The business decreased daily, but the constant emigration of workmen enticed into the neighbouring states by promises, by privileges, and higher wages, occasioned this still to be sufficient for those who remained in the country. Besides this, Renzo possessed a little farm, which he had farmed for him, and which he also farmed himself when the silk-loom stood still, so that for his station he might be said to be at his ease. And although this year there was a still greater scarcity than in the preceding ones, and a real dearth began to be felt, our youth, who, since he had cast his eyes upon Lucia, had become a steward, found himself sufficiently provided for, and had not to struggle with hunger. He appeared before Don Abbondio in holiday costume, with feathers of various colours in his hat, with his dagger with its handsome handle in the pocket of his breeches, and a certain holiday, yet, at the same time, swaggering air, which in those times was common to the most quiet men. The uncertain and mysterious reception of Don Abbondio formed a singular contrast to the joyous and resolute manner of the youth.

• He has something in his head—thought Renzo to

himself, and then said, "I am come, Signor Curato, to know at what hour it will be agreeable to you, that we should be in the church."

"Of what day is it you would speak?"

"How! do you not know what has been fixed for to-day?"

"To-day?" replied Don Abbondio, as though he heard this spoken of for the first time, "To-day, to-day——Have patience——to-day I cannot."

"You cannot to-day! What has happened?"

"First of all, I do not feel myself quite well you see."

"I am sorry, but what has to be done is a matter of so little time, and so little fatigue——"

"And then, and then, and then——"

"And then what?"

"And then the difficulties."

"What difficulties can there be?"

"It would be necessary for you to be in our shoes, in order to know how many obstacles rise up in these affairs, how many accounts there are to be rendered. I have too tender a heart. I only think of aiding the removal of these obstacles, of facilitating every thing, of doing every thing according to the pleasure of others, and I neglect my duty, and then I am overwhelmed with reproaches and worse."

"But in the name of heaven, don't keep me thus upon the rack! tell me clearly and distinctly what all this is."

"Do you know how many formalities are necessary to make a marriage legal?"

"I ought to know something of it," said Renzo, beginning to get angry, "since you have already

sufficiently crazed me about it, for these many days past. But now, is not every thing despatched? Is not every thing done which had to be done?"

"All, all appears so to you—because—have patience—I am the ass, who neglects his duty through fear of causing pain to others. But now——enough, I know what I say. We poor curates are between the anvil and the hammer. You grow impatient——I pity you, poor youth, and the Superiors——enough, I cannot tell thee all. We are the go-betweens."

"But explain to me once for all, what is this other formality which has yet to be performed, as you say, and this shall be done immediately."

"Do you know how many absolute impediments there are?"

"But what do you wish that I should know about impediments?"

"Error, conditio, votum, cognatio, crimen, Cultus disparitas, vis, ordo, ligamen, honestas, Si sis affinis——," began Don Abbondio, counting them upon the point of his fingers.

"You are playing a joke with me," interrupted the youth. "What should I know of your *latinorum*?"

"Well, then, if you don't understand these things, have patience, and leave them to those who do."

"Well——"

"Go away, dear Renzo; do not get angry, which you are very ready to do——every thing which depends upon me——I—I should like to see you contented; I wish you well. Ah! when I think how well you were off; what is it that you are in want of? And now this whim of marrying has sprung up——"

"What manner of discourse is this, *Signor mio*?" interrupted Renzo, with a look between astonishment and anger.

"I talk for the sake of talking—I should like to see you contented."

"In short ——"

"In short, my son, I am not to blame, I have not made the laws; and before performing a marriage, we ourselves are obliged to make many, many inquiries, to assure ourselves that there are no impediments."

"But come, tell me once for all, what impediment has arisen?"

"Have patience; these are not things to be deciphered thus immediately. This will be nothing, as I hope; but, notwithstanding, these inquiries must be made. The text is clear and plain—*antequam matrimonium denunciaret*——"

"I have already said I do not wish for Latin."

"But it is necessary, in order that I explain to you ——"

"But have you not already made all these inquiries?"

"No, I have not made them all, as I should have done, I tell you."

"Why have you not made them in time? Why tell me all was ended? Why expect?——"

"See! you blame my too great goodness. I have facilitated every thing in order to serve you more quickly; but—but now are arrived—enough, I know."

"And what do you desire that I should do?"

"Have patience for some days. My dear son, a few days is not an eternity. Have patience."

"For how long?"

"We are in a good harbour," thought Don Abbondio to himself; and with a manner more polite than ever, "Come," said he, "in fourteen days I will endeavour—I will take care——"

"In fourteen days! O, indeed, this is news! All has been done as you desired; the day is fixed, the day arrives,—and now you tell me to wait fourteen days! Fourteen days!!" repeated he then with a louder and more angry voice, raising his arm, and striking the air with his clenched fist. And who knows what devilish business might not have been attached to this member, had not Don Abbondio interrupted him by taking his other hand with a timid and yet eager affability? "Come, come, do not make yourself angry, for the love of heaven! I will see, I will try if in a week——"

"And what must I say to Lucia?"

"That it has been a mistake of mine."

"And to the remarks of the world?"

"Say only to every one that I have made a mistake through too much zeal, through too much goodness of heart; throw all the blame upon my back. Can any one say anything better? Go away for a week."

"And then there will be no longer any impediment?"

"When I say ——"

"Well, I will have patience for a week; but remember well, that this week passed, you will not satisfy me longer with idle talk. In the mean time, I take my leave." And saying this he left the room, making Don Abbondio an inclination less profound than usual, and casting a glance at him more expressive than reverential. Having left the house, and

for the first time approaching unwillingly the abode of his betrothed, he in the midst of his wrath turned over in his mind this conversation, and each time found it more strange. The cold and embarrassed reception of Don Abbondio; his manner of speaking, at once constrained and impatient; those two grey eyes which while he spoke were trying to escape here and there, as though they were afraid of encountering the words which issued from his lips; his novel conduct regarding this marriage, so expressly agreed upon; and above all, his hinting always at some great thing, but never speaking clearly;—all these circumstances together made Renzo imagine that perhaps there was some mystery different to that which Don Abbondio had wished to make him believe. The youth hesitated a moment whether he should not turn back and force him to speak more clearly; but raising his eyes, he saw Perpetua, who was coming towards him, and who entered a little kitchen-garden a few paces distant from the house. Whilst she was opening the gate he called to her; hastening his step, he joined her at the entrance, and then, with the design of discovering something more positive, paused to begin a conversation.

“Good-day, Perpetua; I hoped to-day that we should all have been merry together.”

“As God wills it, my poor Renzo.”

“Do me a kindness: this good man, the Signor Curato, has been assigning certain reasons, which I have not been able to understand; explain to me better why he has not been able to marry us to-day.”

“O! it seems to you then that I know my master’s secrets?”

"I said there was a mystery underneath all this," thought Renzo; and in order to bring it to light, he continued—"Come, Perpetua, we are friends; tell me what you know; assist a poor fellow."

"It is an evil thing to be born poor, my dear Renzo."

"This is true," replied the other, still more confirmed in his suspicions; and endeavouring to approach nearer the question, "this is true," he added, "but does it become priests to behave ill towards the poor!"

"Listen, Renzo! I cannot tell anything—because I don't know anything; but this I can assure you, that my master does not wish to do wrong either by you or by any one; it is not *he* who is in fault!"

"Who then is?" demanded Renzo, with an indifferent air, but a heart all suspense and an ear all attention.

"When I tell you that I know nothing — In defence of my master, however, I can speak, since it pains me to hear you give him the character of wishing to hurt any one. Poor man, if he sins, it is through too much goodness. But there are enough rogues, oppressors, and men without the fear of God, in this world."

"Oppressors! rogues!" thought Renzo; "these are not then the Superiors?" "Come," said he, concealing with difficulty his increasing agitation, "come, tell me who this is?"

"Ah, you wish to make me speak, and I cannot speak, since I do not know anything; when one does not know anything, it is as though one had sworn to keep silence. You might torture me, but you would

not get anything out of my mouth. Adieu!—this is lost time to both of us;” and saying this, she entered in haste the little garden, and closed the gate. Renzo answered by a bow, and turned back very softly, in order not to inform her of the road which he took; but when he was out of the range of the good lady’s hearing, he lengthened his strides, and in a moment was at Don Abbondio’s door; entered, went to the little parlour where he had left him, found him there, and hastened towards him with a daring manner and flashing eyes.

“Eh, eh! what is all this?” said Don Abbondio.

“Who is this oppressor?” demanded Renzo, in the voice of one who is determined to obtain a precise answer; “who is this oppressor who wills that I shall not marry Lucia?”

“Who?—who?—who?” stammered the poor curate, quite surprised, with a countenance become in an instant white and flabby, like a rag just taken out of the wash, and still muttering, sprang out of his great chair, in order to escape by the door; but Renzo, who must have expected this movement, was all alert, flew there before him, seized the key, and put it into his pocket.

“Ah, ah! will you speak now, Signor Curato? Every one knows my affairs but myself; and by Bacchus, I also will know them! What is the name of this man?”

“Renzo, Renzo! for charity, mind what you do! think of your soul!”

“I think that I will know this immediately—this very moment!” and thus saying, he placed—perhaps without being aware of it himself—his hand upon

the handle of his knife, which protruded from his pocket.

"Mercy!" exclaimed Don Abbondio, with a hoarse voice.

"I will know it!"

"Who has told you ——"

"No, no; no more lies: speak clearly and quickly."

"Will you murder me?"

"You know that which I have a right to know."

"But if I speak I am dead. Ought not my life to be of consequence to me?"

"Then speak!"

This *then* was pronounced with such energy, and Renzo's look became so menacing, that Don Abbondio could no longer suppose the possibility of disobeying.

"You promise me, you swear," said he, "not to speak of it to any one; never to say ——?"

"I promise you to commit a folly, if you do not immediately tell me the name of this man."

At this new entreaty, Don Abbondio, with the look and countenance of one who has the instrument of the dentist in his mouth, uttered, "Don"——

"Don?" repeated Renzo, as though to assist the patient in bringing forth the rest; and he stood bent forward, his ear over the mouth of Don Abbondio, his arms stretched out, and his hands clenched.

"Don Rodrigo!" pronounced in haste the poor priest, hurrying over these few syllables, and sliding the consonants into each other, partly through perturbation, partly since he had employed the little attention which remained free to him in making an agreement between his two causes of terror, and appeared desirous of taking away and decreasing in

value the words, in the very moment when he was constrained to give them forth.

"Ah, dog!" shouted Renzo, "and what did you do, what did you say to ——?"

"How, then? how?" answered Don Abbondio, with a somewhat angry voice, who, after this great sacrifice, felt himself in a certain way become the creditor. "How? I wish this had happened to you as it has to me, who have nothing to do with the affair; then certainly there would not have remained so many whims in your head." And here he painted in terrible colours the ugly rencounter, and gradually in his discourse might be perceived a mighty anger within him, which until then had lain concealed and enveloped in fear; and seeing, at the same time, that Renzo, between rage and confusion, stood immovable with his head bowed, he continued more boldly: "You've done a fine action! You've rendered me a fine service! An action of this sort to a gentleman, to your curate!—in his own house!—in a sacred place! You've shewn fine prowess! To draw out of my mouth, my own misfortune and yours! That which I had concealed from you through prudence, and for your own good! And now that you know it, I should like to see what you would have done to me? For the love of heaven! It is no joking matter; it does not treat of right and wrong,—it treats of strength. And when this morning I gave you a good piece of advice, eh! Suddenly what a rage you flew into! I have judgment enough for both you and myself; but what is done?—Open the door at least, give me my key."

"I may have done wrong," returned Renzo, with

a voice softened towards Don Abbondio, but in which was heard his anger against his discovered enemy. "I may have done wrong, but lay your hand upon your heart and think if in my situation——"

Thus saying, he took out of his pocket the key, and went to unlock the door. Don Abbondio followed after him; and whilst he placed the key in the key-hole, approached him with a serious and anxious face, and raising the three first fingers of the right hand as though he would assist him in his turn, "swear, at least,——" he said.

"I may have done wrong; but pardon me," answered Renzo, opening the door, and preparing to go out.

"Swear!" replied Don Abbondio, holding his arm fast with his trembling hand.

"I may have done wrong," replied Renzo, setting off in great haste, and thus cutting short the question which like many another, either of literature or philosophy, or in fact regarding anything else, might have lasted centuries, since neither party did anything but repeat his own argument.

"Perpetua! Perpetua!" cried Don Abbondio, after having in vain called after the fugitive. Perpetua did not answer, Don Abbondio no longer knew in what world he was.

It has happened, more than once, to personages of much more consideration than Don Abbondio, to find themselves in such vexatious situations, in such uncertainty of resolve, that the very best remedy has seemed to them to be to fall ill of a fever. He, however, was not obliged to go and seek for this remedy, since it presented itself. The fright of the

preceding day, the night passed in agonising watching, the terror he had this moment experienced, and anxiety for the future, produced this effect. Troubled and stupified, he rested himself in his great chair; beginning to feel piercing cold in his bones, he gazed on his finger-nails, sighed, and called "Perpetua!" from time to time, with a tremulous and angry voice. At length she arrived with a large cabbage under her arm, and a very innocent face, as though there were nothing the matter. We will spare the reader the laments, the condolences, the accusations, the defences, the "only you could have spoken," and the "I have not spoken," in short, all this tedious colloquy. Suffice it to say, that Don Abbondio ordered Perpetua to bolt the door, and not to open it again on any consideration, and if any one knocked to answer from the window, that the Curate was gone to bed ill of a fever. Then he slowly ascended the stairs, saying at every three steps, "I am served," and in truth put himself to bed, where we will leave him for the present.

Renzo, in the meantime with hasty steps made his way home, without having determined what he ought to do, but with a madness upon him to do something strange and terrible. Provocators, oppressors, all those who, in whatsoever manner do injury to others, are guilty, not alone of the evil they themselves commit, but also of the violent deeds occasioned by the anger of the injured party. Renzo was a peaceful youth, averse to bloodshed, of an open disposition, and an enemy to deceit; but in this moment his heart only beat for homicide, his mind was only occupied with imagining a deed of treachery. He would have

wished to rush to the house of Don Rodrigo, seize him by the throat, and ——; but it came into his mind that this house was like a fortress, garnished with bravoës within and guarded without; that alone the best known friends and servants entered freely without being searched from head to foot; that an unknown artisan could not enter without an examination, and that he, above all others——that he, perhaps, would be only too well known there. He imagined then to himself the taking his musket, planting himself behind a hedge, waiting if ever this enemy should pass by alone; and he, busying himself with ferocious pleasure in this imagination, pictured to himself that he heard a footstep, recognised the villain, leveled his musket, took aim, shot—that he saw him fall, and breathe his last! and that he then, hurling a curse after him, flew along the road which led to the frontiers, there to place himself in safety. And Lucia? scarcely had this name crossed these wicked imaginings, than all the better thoughts of Renzo's mind crowded upon him. He recalled the last admonitions of his parents, he remembered God, the Madonna, and the Saints; the thoughts of the happiness he had so often experienced in feeling himself free from crime, of the horror he had so often felt at the relation of homicide; and turned away from this dream of blood, with horror, with remorse, and yet at the same time with a species of joy in alone having imagined this. But the thought of Lucia, how many others did it not bring along with it! So many hopes, so many promises, a future so attractive and held so secure, and this day so often sighed for! And then with what words to announce to her such news? And

then what course to pursue? How to make her his, in despite of the power of this wicked noble? And together with all this, not a shaped suspicion, but a tormenting shadow passed through his mind. This oppression of Don Rodrigo's could not have been excited but by a brutal passion for Lucia. And Lucia? That she could have given him the slightest occasion, the slightest encouragement, however, was not a thought to fix itself for one moment in the mind of Renzo. But was she informed of it? Could he have conceived this infamous passion without her being aware of it? Would he have pushed things so far without having tempted her in some manner? And Lucia had never said a word of this to him, to her betrothed! Governed by these thoughts, he passed his house, which stood in the middle of the village, and traversing the street, reached Lucia's cottage, which was situated at the opposite end. This cottage had a small court-yard before it, which separated it from the road, and was surrounded by a stone wall. Renzo entered the court, and heard a mingled and continuous hum, which proceeded from an upper chamber. He thought that these would be friends and gossips of the neighbourhood, come to attend upon Lucia, and he did not wish to shew himself to this assemblage, with such news in his mien and countenance. A little girl who was in the court-yard ran towards him, crying, "the bridegroom, the bridegroom!"

"Hush, Bettina, hush!" said Renzo. "Come here; go up to Lucia, draw her aside, and whisper in her ear, but so that no one either hears or suspects anything, dost thou see?—say that I have something

to tell her, that I wait for her in the room on the ground-floor, and that she must come quickly."

The little maiden ascended the stairs in haste, happy and proud to have a secret commission to execute. At this moment Lucia gaily attired, issued forth from the hands of her mother. The friends seized upon the bride, and compelled her to let herself be seen; and she defending herself with the rather warlike modesty of the peasant girl, bending her face over her bosom, shielded it with her elbow, contracted her long black eyebrows, whilst her lips opened with a smile. Her black and youthful hair, parted above the forehead with a white and direct line, was confined at the back of the head in a multitude of braids, through which, according to the usage of the peasant girls of Milan, were passed long silver needles arranged upright round the head, like to the rays of a glory. Round her neck she had a necklace of garnets, alternating with beads of filigree-gold; she wore a bodice of flowered brocade, the sleeves separated from the bodice and adorned with beautiful ribbons, a short skirt, with many minute thick plaits, vermillion-coloured stockings, and little shoes also, of embroidered silk. Beside these, which were the ornaments peculiar to the wedding-day, she was adorned with the every-day ornaments of a modest loveliness, now relieved and increased by the various emotions which painted themselves on her countenance; a joy, tempered by a slight disquiet—that placid anguish which from time to time shews itself in the face of the bride, and which, without destroying her beauty, gives it a peculiar character. The little Bettina ran into the company, and approaching Lucia,

and giving her to understand that she had something to communicate, whispered the message in her ear. "I go for a moment, but I return," said Lucia to the women, and descended in haste. Seeing the mute countenance and unquiet manner of Renzo, "What is this?" she demanded, not without a presentiment of terror.

"Lucia!" answered Renzo; "for to-day all is at an end, and God only knows when we shall be man and wife."

"How!" said Lucia, very much distressed. Renzo related briefly to her the history of the morning: she listened with agony, and when she heard the name of Don Rodrigo—

"Ah!" exclaimed she, blushing and trembling; "how is it come thus far?"

"Then you knew?" said Renzo.

"Only too much!" replied Lucia; "but thus far!"

"What do you know?"

"Do not make me speak of it now, do not make me weep. I will run and call my mother, and dismiss the women; we must be alone." Whilst she was going out of the room, Renzo muttered, "But you have never said anything of this to me."

"Ah, Renzo," Lucia replied, turning round, but without pausing. Renzo understood very well that his name pronounced in this moment, and in this tone by Lucia, meant to say, can you doubt I have kept silence except from pure and just motives?

In the meanwhile, the good Agnese (this was the name of Lucia's mother), whose suspicion and curiosity had been excited by the whisper and disappearance of her daughter, had descended to see what had hap-

pened. The daughter left her alone with Renzo, and, composing the best she could her voice and manner, said, "The Signor Curato has fallen ill, and nothing will take place to-day." This said, she saluted all in haste and again descended.

The women separated and disappeared to talk over what had happened. Two or three even went to the Curato's door, to see if he were really fallen sick. "A fever," replied Perpetua from the window; and these sad words, reported to the others, cut short the conjectures which had already begun to stir in their brains, and to announce themselves short and mysteriously in their discourses.

CHAPTER III.

LUCIA entered the room on the ground-floor whilst Renzo stood sorrowfully relating the history to Agnese, who sorrowfully listened to him. Both turned towards the one who knew more of this affair than they, and from whom they expected an explanation which could only be sad; both shewed in the midst of their sorrow, with the different love which each bore towards Lucia, a different anger, since she had been silent towards them regarding this subject—a subject of such importance too. Agnese, however anxious to hear her daughter speak, could not prevent herself reproaching her. “And to say nothing of an affair like this to thy mother?”

“Now I will tell you all,” answered Lucia, drying her eyes with her apron.

“Speak, speak!” cried at once the mother and the bridegroom.

“Holy Virgin!” exclaimed Lucia, “who would have believed that things would have gone thus far!” And then, with a voice interrupted by weeping, she related how a few days before, when she was returning from the silk-winding, and had remained behind her companions, Don Rodrigo, in company with another Signor, had passed her; that Don Rodrigo had tried to amuse her with idle talk, which was not

very beautiful she said, but that she, without listening to him, had hastened her pace and joined her companions, hearing the other Signor laughing very much, and Don Rodrigo saying, 'Come, let us bet!' The following day they were again upon the road, but Lucia was in the midst of her companions, her eyes cast down, the other Signor burst out into a loud laugh, and Don Rodrigo said, 'We shall see, we shall see.' By the grace of heaven (continued Lucia), this day was the last of the silk-winding. I related this immediately ——"

"To whom hast thou related it?" demanded Agnese, stepping forward, not without a little anger at the naming of the preferred confidant.

"To Father Cristoforo, in confession, mother," answered Lucia, with a soft accent of excuse. "I related all to him the last time we went together to the church of the convent; and if you recollect that morning I was arranging first one thing and then another in order to delay our walk, until other country people should be going the same way, so that we could go along in company with them; for after this rencounter the roads frightened me so much ——"

At the revered name of the Father Cristoforo, the anger of Agnese softened itself. "Thou hast done well," said she; "but why not relate all to thy mother also?"

Lucia had two good reasons: one, not to make sad and terrify the good woman about a thing for which she would have been unable to find a remedy; the other, not to risk the travelling from mouth to mouth of this history, which she wished zealously to keep secret: all the more so, as Lucia hoped her marriage

would end this hated persecution. Of these two reasons, however, she only alleged the first.

"And to you," said she, then addressing Renzo, in that tone of voice which is intended to convince a friend that he has been in the wrong; "and to you ought I to have spoken of this? Is it not too much that you should know it now?"

"And what has the Father said to thee?" asked Agnese.

"He said I should endeavour to hasten the marriage the most I could, and in the meantime remain within doors; that I should pray a deal to our Lord, and he hoped that this man, seeing no more of me, would no longer think about me. And it was then that I strove," continued she, turning again to Renzo, without, however, raising her eyes to his face, and blushing very much; "it was then that I put on a bold face, and prayed you to endeavour to hasten and conclude the marriage before the time that had been arranged. Who knows what you have thought of me! But I did it for our good, and I had been counselled, and I held it for certain ——, and this morning I was far from thinking ——" Here her words were interrupted by a violent burst of tears.

"Ah, the villain! the damned one! the assassin!" cried Renzo, striding up and down the room, and grasping from time to time the handle of his knife.

"Oh, what a scheme!" exclaimed Agnese. The youth stopping suddenly before Lucia, who was weeping, regarded her with a look of tender melancholy, yet with something of anger, and said, "this is the last action of this assassin."

"Ah! no Renzo, for the love of heaven!" cried

Lucia. "No, no; for the love of heaven! The Lord is still with the poor, and how will you that he should help us if we do evil?"

"No, no; for the love of heaven!" repeated Agnese.

"Renzo," said Lucia, with an air of hope and calmer resolution, "you have a trade, and I know how to work; let us remove farther off, so that he may no longer hear us spoken of."

"Ah, Lucia; and then? We are not yet man and wife. And will the Curate give us our papers? Such a man as he is. If we were married, oh! then ——" Lucia began to weep again; all three remained in silence, and in attitudes which formed a sad contrast to the festive pomp of their dress.

"Listen, my children; give heed to me;" said Agnese, after some moments: "I came into the world before you, and I know a little of the world. It is not necessary you should terrify yourselves thus; the devil is not so black as they paint him. To us poor creatures the skeins appear all the more entangled, because we do not know how to find the beginning of them; but at times the counsel, the word of a man who has studied —— I know very well what I would say. Do according to me, Renzo; go to Lucco, seek the Doctor Azzecca-garbugli [Seek-Squabble], relate to him —— But don't call him thus, for the love of heaven! this is only a nick-name. You must call him the Signor Doctor —— Now what is his name? Oh, see! I don't know his real name; they always call him so. But enough! Inquire for this old, lean, bald, red-nosed doctor, who has the mark of a raspberry on his cheek."

"I know him by sight," said Renzo.

"Well," continued Agnese, "this is a great man. I have seen more than one who was more embarrassed than a chicken in a heap of tow, after he had been a quarter of an hour alone with Azzecgarbugli (but take care and don't call him so!) I have seen him, I say, laugh himself at his own troubles. Take these four capons, poor little creatures! whose necks I should have wrung for the Sunday's banquet, and carry them to him; since one must never go empty-handed to these signors. Relate to him all that has happened, and you will see that he will tell you upon the spot, things which would never have come into our heads did we think for a whole year."

Renzo adopted most willingly this advice; Lucia approved, and Agnese, proud of having given it, raised one by one the poor birds out of their coop, joined their right legs together, as though she were making a nosegay of flowers, wrapped them round, tied them together with packthread, and consigned them into Renzo's hand; who, having given and received words of hope, went out through the garden in order not to be seen by the children, who would have run after him shouting, "The bridegroom! the bridegroom!" Thus he made his way across the fields by small pathways, fuming, thinking over his misfortune, and considering the discourse he had to hold with the Doctor. We leave it to the reader to imagine what sort of a journey these poor capons had, thus tied together, held by their claws head downwards in the hand of a man, who accompanied with action the thoughts which passed tumultuously through his mind.

Now in anger he stretched forth his arm, now raised it in desperation, now with a menace shook it in the air, in every mood giving these poor birds most horrible shakes, and making their four dangling heads jump about; they in the meanwhile endeavouring to peck each other, as only too often happens among companions in misfortune.

Arrived at the village, he inquired for the habitation of the Doctor; it was indicated to him, and there he immediately went. Entering, he felt himself seized with that sentiment which the illiterate poor experience in the presence of a gentleman and a learned man, and forgot all the speeches he had prepared; but giving a glance at the capons, he reassured himself. He entered the kitchen, and asked the servant whether he could speak with the Signor Doctor. She gazed at the capons as though she were accustomed to such gifts, and laid hands upon them; whereupon Renzo drew himself back, desiring that the Doctor should see, and know, he had brought something with him. The Doctor arrived precisely as the woman was saying, "Give them here, and go forward." Renzo made a very low reverence, the Doctor received him politely, with a "Come my son," and made him enter his study with him. This was a small apartment, on the three sides of which were hung the twelve Cæsars; the fourth was covered with a large bookcase of old dusty books; in the middle of the room stood a table strewn over with books, petitions, pamphlets, and proclamations; around it were arranged three or four seats, and on one side stood a large arm-chair, with an old square back terminating at the angles in two ornaments of wood,

which stood up after the manner of horns; this chair was covered with Russian leather, studded with great studs, some of which fallen out from age left at liberty the angles of the covering, which formed itself into folds here and there. The Doctor was in his house-dress, that is in a robe now shabby, but which many years before had served him to make speeches in during his time of preparation, when called to Milan by some cause of importance. He closed the door, and encouraged the youth with the words, "My son, tell me your case."

"I wish to tell you something in confidence."

"Here I am," replied the Doctor, "speak;" and he seated himself in his great chair. Renzo stood straight before the table, one hand placed in the crown of his hat, which he made to spin round with the other, and recommenced—

"I wish to know from you, who have studied ——"

"Tell me the case as it is," interrupted the Doctor.

"You will excuse me; we poor people do not speak well. I should like to know ——"

"Good people! This is always the way with you; instead of relating the facts, you will always be asking questions, because you have already got your own designs in your heads."

"Excuse me, Signor Doctor, I wish to know if the threatening a Curate to prevent his performing a marriage, is penal?"

"I understand," said the Doctor to himself. "I understand," though, in truth, he did not understand. And immediately he became grave, but it was a gravity mingled with compassion and importance; he pressed his lips closely together, making issue out

of them an inarticulate sound, which suggested the sentiment more clearly expressed in the first words he uttered. "A serious case, my son; a case already considered. You have done well to come to me. It is a clear case, and has been considered in a hundred edicts; and precisely in one of the last year, by the present governor; I will let you see it, and have it in your own hand." Thus saying, he rose from his great chair, and thrust his hands into this chaos of papers.

"Where is it? It is neither here nor there. One is obliged to have so many things at hand. But certainly it must be here! since it is an edict of importance. Ah, here it is! here it is!" He took it, unfolded it, and looked at the date, making a still more serious face, exclaiming, "the 15th of October 1627! Certainly, it is of the past year; a new edict; these always cause the most terror. Do you know how to read, my son?"

"A very little, Signor Doctor."

"Well, come behind me, and follow with your eye, and you shall see."

And, holding forth the edict open in the air, he began to read, muttering hurriedly in some places, and resting with distinctness and great emphasis at others, as was required by the sense:—"According to the edict published by order of the Signor Duke of Feria, the 14th of December 1620, and confirmed by the Illustrious and Excellent Signor, Signor Gonzalo Fernández of Cordova, etc. etc., provided with rigorous and severe remedies for those oppressions, exactions, and tyrannical acts, which any may be daring enough to commit against the very devoted

subjects of his Majesty, the frequent excesses of every kind, and the malice, etc., has increased to such a point, that it has necessitated his Excellence, etc. etc. Whence, with the advice of the Senators and a Council, etc., he has resolved to publish the present proclamation. And commencing with the acts of tyranny; experience shews that many, both in this city as well as in the country towns of this state ——' "Do you hear?" 'extort and oppress the weak in various ways, forcing them to make contracts of purchase, of leases, etc. ——' "Where am I? Ah, here! Listen;" 'to perform or not to perform marriages,' —— "Eh?"

"That is my case," said Renzo.

"Listen, listen; there is still more, and then we shall see the penalties——' If testified, or not testified; if one leave the place of his abode, etc. ——; that this one pay a debt, that this other do not molest him; that this one go to his mill ——' All this has nothing to do with us. Ah, here we are!——' that the priest not doing that which he by his office is obliged to do, or doing that which it does not concern him to do ——.' Eh!"

"It appears as though they had made this edict purposely for me."

"Ah! Is it not so? Listen, listen;——' and other similar violences exercised by feuds, nobles, citizens, clowns, etc. ——' No one escapes; they are all there, it is like the valley of Jehoshaphat. Now hear the penalty. 'All these and similar wicked acts, although they are prohibited, still not decreasing, his Excellence deems it necessary to exercise greater rigour, etc., orders and commands that the transgressors

of the preceding clauses, or similar, shall be proceeded against with all the customary formalities of this state, suffering punishment both pecuniary and corporal, banishment, or the galleys, and even death ——' a trifle!—' according to the judgment of his Excellence and of the Senate, as the nature of the case, of the person and of the circumstances, shall direct, and this without pardon, and with every rigour, etc.' Every thing is provided for; eh? And you see here the superscription: '*Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordova*;' and here lower down, '*Platonus*;' and here again, '*Vidit Ferrer*;' nothing is wanting."

Whilst the Doctor read, Renzo followed slowly with his eye, endeavouring to gather the clear meaning, and to consider with due weight these sacred words, which it seemed must be for his assistance. The Doctor was much astonished at this, seeing his new client more attentive than terrified, and thought to himself, he must be enrolled in the brotherhood of bravoos. "Ah! ah!" he then said to Renzo, "you have, however, had your *ciuffo** cut off. You have been prudent; however, putting yourself into my hands, this was not necessary. The case is serious, but you do not know how courageous I can be upon occasion."

In order to understand this digression of the Doctor, it is necessary to know and remember, that at this time the bravoos, by profession, and in fact, villains of every description, used to wear a long lock of hair, which they pulled down over their faces like a visor, when they were in the act of attacking any one, or in cases where they considered it necessary to

* Tufts of hair worn by the bravoos as a disguise.

disguise themselves, and where the action was one of those which required at the same time strength and prudence. The edicts had not been silent regarding this fashion.—“His Excellence (the Marquis de la Hynojosa) commands that whosoever wears the hair of such a length that it shall cover the forehead, exclusive of the eyebrows, or wears locks either above or behind the ears, shall incur the penalty of 300 scudi; or in case of inability to pay this fine, remain three years at the galleys for the first offence, and for the second, beside the above-named penalties, suffer still severer, both pecuniary and corporal, according to the will of his Excellence. It is permitted, however, in case of baldness, or on account of marks or scars, or any other reasonable cause, for health or greater propriety, to wear the hair long enough to cover such defect, but nothing more; being well advised not to exceed what is absolutely necessary, under pain of incurring the punishments imposed upon the other offenders. And it is likewise commanded to barbers, under penalty of a fine of 100 scudi, or of three strappadoes, to be administered in public, and still greater corporal punishments, according to judgment, as above, that they shall not leave those whom they shave any kind of lock, tress, or curl, neither hair longer than ordinary, either in front, at the sides, or behind the ears, but that it shall be of an equal length, except in cases of baldness or other defects, as above stated.” The *ciuffo* was thus a part of the armour, and a distinguishing mark, of the bravo and of all dissolute characters; so that from this circumstance such individuals came to be called *ciuffi*. This term has remained, and exists at the

present day in the dialect of Milan, with its signification, however, much softened; and there will not be perhaps one of my Milanese readers who does not remember having heard in his childhood, either his parents, his master, some friend of the house, or some dependent say of him, he is a *ciuffo*, he is a *ciuffetto*.

“On the word of a poor youth,” replied Renzo, “I have never worn a *ciuffo* in my life.”

“We can do nothing,” continued the Doctor, shaking his head with a smile, between one of malice and impatience, “we can do nothing, if you have not faith in me. He who tells lies to the advocate, do you see my son, is a simpleton, who will tell truth to the judge. To the advocate it is necessary to relate things clearly; it is his business to entangle them. If you wish that I should assist you, it is needful to tell me all from A to Z, with your heart in your hand, as you would to your Confessor. You should name me the person from whom you have received this order; this will most probably be a person of consequence, and in this case I shall go straight to him, so as to fulfil my duty. I will not say to him mind, that I know from *you* that it is he who has sent you. Confide in me. I will say I am come to implore his protection for a poor youth who has been slandered. And with him I will take the necessary means for concluding this affair in the most praiseworthy manner. You understand that in saving himself, he will save you also. If then, this mad prank were entirely on your own account, have courage; I would not shrink back. I have drawn others out of worse scrapes than this. Provided you have

not offended a person of consideration: let us understand each other. I engage to deliver you from this embarrassment with a little expense; let us understand each other. You should tell me who is the offended party, and what is his name; and according to the condition, the quality, and the humour of the friend, it will be seen whether it be more suitable to make him obey through his protection, or find some manner of attacking him as the guilty one, and thus putting a flea in his ear. Since you see, knowing well how to treat these edicts, no one is criminal and no one is innocent. As to the Curate, if he is a judicious man, he will be silent regarding this affair; if he is an obstinate one, there is also a remedy for that. It is possible to get out of any intrigue, but then it requires a clever man; and your case is serious I tell you, serious. The edict speaks clearly; and if the thing were to be decided between justice and you thus, under four eyes, you would be in a pretty position! I speak to you as to a friend; one must pay for one's follies. If you wish to get off smoothly, money and sincerity; confide in those who wish you well, obey, and do all that will be suggested to you."

Whilst the Doctor uttered this host of words, Renzo stood gazing at him with an ecstatic attention, like a clown who, standing in a market-place, gazes at a juggler, who, thrusting into his mouth tow, tow, tow, draws out of it again ribbon, ribbon, ribbon, which seems endless. When, however, he had understood what the Doctor meant to say, and how equivocally he had been understood, he cut short the ribbon in his mouth by saying, "O Signor Doctor, how have you understood me? Properly, all is precisely

the opposite. *I* have menaced no one; I don't do such things. Only ask my acquaintance, then you will hear that I have never had anything to do with justice. This knavish trick was played upon *me*, and I came to you to know how I am to obtain justice; and I am very glad to have seen this edict."

"*Diavolo!*" exclaimed the Doctor, opening his eyes very wide, "what stuff are you now telling me? Thus it is, you are all alike. Can you never relate things clearly?"

"Excuse me, you have not given me time. Now I will relate the affair just as it is. You must know, then, that to-day I was to wed," and here Renzo's voice betrayed his emotion, "I was to wed a young girl whom I have courted since this summer, and to-day, as I said, was the day fixed upon by the Signor Curato, and he had arranged every thing; but, behold! the Signor Curato began to assign certain excuses — but enough — not to weary you, I have spoken openly to him, which was only right, and he has confessed that he has been prohibited, under pain of death, from performing this marriage. This oppressor Don Rodrigo ——"

"Ah, well!" interrupted the Doctor, suddenly contracting his brows, wrinkling his red nose, and twisting his mouth, "Ah, well! why are you come to annoy me with these lies? Discourse in this way among yourselves, you who don't know how to restrain your words; but don't come and tell lies to a gentleman, who knows how much they are worth. Go, go, you don't know what you say; I don't trouble myself about children; I don't wish to hear such manner of discourse, such airy talk."

"I swear to you ——"

"Go, I say. What would you have me make of your oaths? I don't enter into this affair. I wash my hands of it;" and he rubbed his hands as though in the act of washing them. "Learn to speak. It is not proper to surprise a gentleman thus."

"But hear, hear!" repeated Renzo in vain; the Doctor still scolding, pushed him with his hands towards the door; and when he had chased him there, opened it, and calling the servant, said to her, "return immediately to this man what he brought with him—I will have nothing, nothing!"

The woman, during all the time she had been in the house, had never executed a similar order; but this, however, was uttered with such resolution, that she did not hesitate to obey. She took the four poor birds, and gave them to Renzo with a look of disdainful compassion, which seemed to say, "thou must needs have acted finely." Renzo made some excuses about receiving them; but the Doctor was not to be moved, and the youth more astonished and wrathful than ever, was obliged to receive back the refused victims, and returned again to the country to relate to Lucia and Agnese the beautiful conclusion to his expedition.

The women during his absence, after having sorrowfully taken off their holiday attire and put on their work-a-day dresses, began their consultations afresh. Lucia sobbing, and Agnese weeping. When Agnese had spoken a deal about the great effects which they might expect from the counsels of the Doctor, Lucia said it was necessary to try and help themselves in every possible manner; that Father Cristoforo was

not a man alone to give counsel, but a man also who would give his own personal assistance when aiding the poor was the question, and that it would be a good thing to let him know what had happened. "Certainly," said Agnese; and they both sought to discover how this might be done, since this day they did not feel courageous enough to go themselves to the convent, which was distant about two miles, and certainly no prudent person would have counselled them to this. But whilst they were balancing the dangers, they heard a knock at the door, and at the same moment, a low, but distinct '*Deo gratias.*' Lucia, imagining who it might be, ran to open the door, and immediately, after a short familiar inclination, entered a Capuchin purveyor, with his sack hanging over his left shoulder, and holding the mouth of it tight and twisted with both hands upon his chest.

"Oh, Fra Galdino!" said the two women.

"The Lord be with you!" returned the brother. "I am come to collect walnuts."

"Go and get the nuts for the Fathers," said Agnese. Lucia rose, and moved towards the next room, but before entering she stepped a moment behind Fra Galdino, who still remained precisely in the same position, and placing her finger upon her lips, gave her mother a glance, which besought secrecy with tenderness, with supplication, and yet at the same time with a certain authority.

"And the marriage?" said the purveyor, leering at Agnese from a-far. "It ought however to take place to-day; I have seen in the village a certain confusion, as though there were something out of the common way. What has happened?"

"The Signor Curato has been taken ill, and it has been necessary to defer it," answered the mother in haste. Had Lucia not given the sign, the answer would have been probably quite different. "And how does your collection go on," she added, in order to change the discourse.

"But indifferently my good lady, but indifferently; all are here." And saying this, he raised the sack from his shoulders, threw it up, and then caught it again in his hands. "All are here; and in order to collect this beautiful abundance, I have been obliged to knock at ten doors."

"But the crops are so bad, Fra Galdino, and when bread has to be measured out, one cannot be lavish with the rest."

"But what is the remedy, my good lady, to make the good times return? Why giving alms. Do you know the miracle of the walnuts, which happened not many years ago in our convent of Romagna?"

"No, in truth I do not. Relate it to me."

"Oh! well then you must know that in this convent, there was one of our fathers who was a saint, and who was called Father Macario. One winter's day, going along a footpath in a field of one of our benefactors, also a very good man — Father Macario saw this benefactor near one of his great walnut-trees, and four peasants, who with their spades were beginning to lay bare the roots of the tree. 'What are you doing to this poor tree?' asked Father Macario. 'Ah, Father! it is years and years since this tree has borne nuts, and now I am going to make it into firewood.' 'Let it stand,' said Father Macario. 'I know that this year it will bear more nuts than leaves.'

The benefactor, who knew who it was that had said this, ordered the labourers to throw the earth again upon the roots, and called after the Father who was continuing his walk, saying, 'The half of the crop shall be for the convent.' The prophecy got spread abroad, and all the world crowded to see the walnut-tree. In fact, in the spring there were flowers to overflowing, and at the proper season, nuts to overflowing. The great benefactor, however, had not the satisfaction of beating them down, for before the harvest he went to heaven, there to receive the reward of his charity. But the miracle was only the greater for this, as you shall hear. This excellent man had left behind him a son of a very different stamp to himself. Now at the harvest, the purveyor went to receive the half which was due to the convent; but this fellow appeared quite astonished, and had the temerity to answer that he had never heard say before that Capuchin friars knew how to make walnuts! Now do you know what happened? one day (only hear this), this good-for-nothing fellow had invited some friends of the same sort as himself, and making merry with them, he related the history of the nuts, and laughed at the friars. These wild youths wishing to go and see this astounding heap of nuts, he conducted them to the granary. But only hear this!—he opens the door, goes towards the corner where the heap of nuts ought to have lain, and sees—what do you think? A beautiful heap of dry leaves! Was not this a fine example? And the convent, instead of losing anything, only gained by this, because after such a remarkable fact, the collection of nuts was so successful, that a benefactor, moved with compassion

for the poor purveyor, made the convent a present of mass, which should assist him in carrying them home. And there was so much oil made, that every poor person might come and take as much as he desired, since we are like the sea, which receives water on all sides, only again to distribute it among the rivers."

Here Lucia returned with her apron so loaded with nuts that she could with difficulty carry them all, holding up its two corners open, with her arms held wide out. Whilst Fra Galdino again took off his sack, placed it on the floor, and opened its mouth to receive this abundant alms, the mother regarded Lucia with an astonished and severe air for her prodigality; but Lucia returned a glance which would say, I can justify myself. Fra Galdino broke forth in eulogies, in auguries, in promises, in thanks, and replacing his sack, set off. But Lucia calling after him, said, "I wish to ask a favour from you, I wish you would tell Father Cristoforo, that I have a great desire to speak to him, and that he will do us a great charity by coming immediately to us, since we are not able to go to the church."

"Do you desire anything else? An hour shall not pass before Father Cristoforo knows your desire."

"I confide in you."

"Do not doubt me." And thus saying, he went away, rather more bent down, and rather more contented than he had come.

Seeing a poor maiden thus sending for Father Cristoforo, and the purveyor, without surprise and without difficulty accepting this commission, it will be imagined perhaps that Father Cristoforo was a poor wretch of a friar, a thing of contempt. He was

on the contrary, a man of much authority, both among his brethren, and in the surrounding country; but such was the condition of the Capuchins, that nothing ever to them appeared either too base or too elevated. To serve the weak, and to be served by the powerful, to enter palaces and huts with the same air of humility and security, to be at the same time, and in the same house a subject of sport, and a personage without whom nothing could be decided; to sue for alms from all, and yet to bestow alms upon all who should demand it at the convent,—to all this the Capuchin was accustomed. Passing along the road, he might equally encounter a prince, who would kiss reverentially the end of his cord, or a troop of lads, who, pretending to quarrel among themselves, would cover his beard with mud. The word *Brother* was uttered in those times with the greatest respect, and with the most bitter scorn; and the Capuchins, perhaps more than any other order, were objects of these two opposite sentiments, and experienced these two opposite fortunes; since, possessing nothing, wearing a habit more singular than usual, making more public profession of humility, they exposed themselves even more openly to the veneration and contempt which these things excite in the different humours and different opinions of men.

“All those nuts! and this year too!” exclaimed Agnese as soon as Fra Galdino was gone.

“Pardon me, mother,” replied Lucia; “if we had only given an alms like the others, Fra Galdino would have been obliged to rove about God knows how long before having his sack full. God knows when he would have been able to return to the convent; and

with all his gossiping, God knows if he would have remembered ——”

“Thou hast done well; and then charity always bears good fruits,” said Agnese, who, with all her failings, was a very good woman; and who would, as she herself said, have gone through fire and water for her only daughter, in whom she had placed all her happiness.

In the meantime Renzo arrived, and entering with a reproachful and mortified air, threw the capons upon a table,—this was the last sad experience of these poor birds for this day.

“Fine advice you have given me!” said he to Agnese. “You have sent me truly to a good gentleman; to one who could assuredly assist the poor!” and here he related his conference with the Doctor. The mother, however, stupefied by this sad result, set about to demonstrate that the advice was good, only that Renzo should have known how to manage the affair. But Lucia interrupted this question, announcing that she now hoped to have found a better assistant. Renzo embraced this new hope with joy, as happens to those who are in misfortune and embarrassment. “But if the Father,” said he, “does not find us a remedy, I will find one myself, either one way or another.”

The women counselled peace, patience, prudence. “To-morrow,” said Lucia, “the Father Cristoforo will certainly come, and you will see that he will find some remedy which we poor creatures cannot even imagine.”

“I hope so,” said Renzo; “but, at all events, I will know what is justice, and I will have it rendered me. In this world one obtains justice finally.”

This day had passed in sorrowful discourse, and in all this going to and fro which we have related, and it now began to grow dusk.

"Good night!" said Lucia sorrowfully to Renzo, who could not resolve upon going.

"Good night!" answered Renzo still more sorrowfully.

"Some saint will aid us," replied Lucia. "Exercise your patience, and resign yourself."

The mother added other consolations of the same kind, and the bridegroom went, his heart in a tempest, repeating still these strange words—"In this world there is justice finally!"—so true is it that a man overwhelmed with grief no longer knows what he says.

CHAPTER IV.

THE sun had scarcely appeared above the horizon, when Father Cristoforo issued forth from the convent of Pescarenico to ascend to the cottage where he was expected. Pescarenico is an insignificant hamlet on the left bank of the Adda, or rather of the lake, but a short distance from the bridge. It is a little group of houses, inhabited for the most part by fishers, and adorned here and there with fishing-nets hung out to dry. The convent was situated—and the fabric still exists at the present day—beyond the hamlet opposite to the entrance of the village, half way on the road between Bergamo and Lecco. The heaven was perfectly serene; gradually as the sun rose behind the mountains, his light was seen to descend from the summits of the opposite hills, spreading itself rapidly beneath on the slopes and in the valleys; a gentle autumnal breeze, detaching from the branches the leaves already loosened by the frost, carried them away to fall some few paces from the tree. On the right and left, in the vineyards, his still oblique rays glowed upon the foliage, tinted with various hues of red; and the freshly ploughed land shewed itself brown and distinct in the fields of stubble, white and glittering in the dew. The scene itself was joyous; but every human figure which shewed itself saddened the countenance and the thought. At each instant

you were met by ragged and thin beggars, grown old in the trade, or driven to it by necessity. They passed silently by Father Cristoforo, looking at him piteously; and having nothing to expect from him, as a Capuchin never touches money, made him a reverence of gratitude for the alms they had received, or were going to receive, at the convent. In the spectacle of the labourers dispersed over the fields, there was something even more doleful. Some threw in their seed sparingly, with parsimony and ill-will, as though they were risking something of the utmost importance to them; others pushed their spades into the earth with difficulty, and carelessly turned over the clods. The meagre little girl who held by a cord the thin dry cow at pasture, looked round her, and bent down in haste to rob the cow, for food for the family, of some herb, in which famine had taught the poor, that men also could find nourishment. These sights increased at every step the melancholy of the friar, who was travelling on already with a sad presentiment in his heart that he was about to hear some misfortune.

But why did he take so much thought about Lucia? And why at this first intimation had he set out with such solicitude, as though at the call of the Father of the province? And who was Father Cristoforo? It is necessary to satisfy all these demands.

Father Cristoforo da —— was a man nearer sixty than fifty. His head shaven, with the exception of a little crown of hair, which according to the rite of the Capuchins encircled it, was raised from time to time with a movement which betrayed an indescribable something of pride and disquiet, and then immediately

lowered itself with reflection and humility. The beard, white and long, which covered his chest and chin, threw out still more his noble features, to which an abstemiousness long time habitual to him, had added gravity without taking away anything from their expression. His deep-sunken eyes were generally cast towards the earth, but they sometimes sparkled with a most unexpected vivacity; as two fiery horses conducted by the hand of a coachman, whom from habit they know they must obey, will from time to time let themselves be carried away by their impetuosity, but will soon again resign themselves to the bit.

Father Cristoforo had not always been thus, neither had he always been Cristoforo: his name of baptism was Ludovico. He was the son of a merchant of * * * (these asterisks are owing to the circumspection of my Anonymous), who in the latter years of his life, finding himself sufficiently provided with riches, and left with this only son, had renounced trade and commenced the life of a Signor. In his new idleness he became most heartily ashamed of the only time he had spent in being useful in this world, and ruled by such a fancy, he studied in every way to make his having been a merchant forgotten; he would have wished to forget it himself. But the warehouse, the bales of goods, the ledger, the yardwand, appeared always in his memory, like the ghost of Banquo to Macbeth, even amidst the pomp of the festival and the smiles of parasites. It would not be possible to say the care which these poor creatures took to avoid every word which might appear to bear any allusion to the former condition of their host. One day, to relate an instance of this, one day near

the end of the feast, in a moment of the liveliest and freest mirth—when it would have been difficult to say who most enjoyed himself, the guest who cleared the table, or the patron who furnished it—he was rallying one of the revellers, one of the most honest eaters in the world. The guest, carrying on the joke, without the slightest shadow of malice, with the sincerity of a little child, replied, “Ah! I turn a deaf ear to you, I make the merchant’s ear.” He himself, struck immediately with the sound of these words as they escaped his lips, looked with uncertainty at the countenance of the patron, which had become clouded. Both would have wished to return to their former discourse, but that was not possible. Each guest thought to himself how to suppress this little scandal, and to direct the general attention; but thinking, they were silent, and in this silence the scandal was even still more obvious. Each one avoided the eyes of the other, each one felt that all were occupied with one thought, which all desired to dissemble. Joy, for this day, had taken its departure, and this imprudent, or more justly speaking, this unfortunate one, never again received an invitation. Thus the father of Ludovico passed his last years in constant anxiety, fearing to be ridiculed, never reflecting that selling is a thing no more ridiculous than buying, and that the profession which he was now ashamed of, he had without remorse exercised many years in the presence of the public. He had his son nobly educated according to the manners of the times, and as far as laws and customs permitted him; he gave him both masters for learning and for knightly exercises; and died leaving him rich and young. Ludovico

had contracted lordly habits, and the flatterers among whom he had grown up, had accustomed him to see himself always treated with respect. But when he desired to mingle with the nobles of his city, he found treatment very different from that which he was accustomed to, and saw that did he wish to be of their society, as he would have done, he must go through a new school of patience and submission, always remain their inferior, and every moment swallow some indignity. Such a mode of life did not accord with Ludovico's education or character. He withdrew himself from them in pique. But then he remained at a distance from them with sorrow, since it appeared to him that these ought truly to have been his companions, only he would have wished them rather more amiable. With this mingling of inclination and rancour, it was impossible to frequent their society familiarly, and yet wishing to have intercourse with them in some way or other, he began to compete with them in luxury and magnificence, buying thus with ready money, envy and ridicule. His nature, at once honourable and violent, embarked him early in other and more serious contentions. He felt a spontaneous and sincere horror in beholding oppressions and injuries. A horror rendered still more lively in him by the quality of those persons who mostly committed these deeds in broad daylight, and who were precisely those against whom he had more than this one cause of aversion. To appease or to exercise these passions at once, he willingly took the part of a weak and oppressed man, and priding himself in opposing the oppressor, he introduced himself into one quarrel, which led him into another, so that

by little and little he began to consider himself as the protector of the oppressed, and the revenger of wrongs. The task was a grave one; and one need not ask whether Ludovico had enemies, occupations, and many thoughts. Besides the external war, he was continually troubled by inward contests; since in order to succeed in an undertaking (not to speak of those in which he remained the vanquished party), it was necessary that he also should adopt subterfuges and violence, of which his conscience could never approve. He was obliged to maintain around him a good number of bravoës; and thus for his security as well as for having in them a more vigorous assistance, he was obliged to select the most daring, that is to say, the most licentious, and to live with scoundrels through his love of justice. So much so, that more than once, when discouraged after an unfortunate issue, or disquieted by some imminent danger, wearied of this continual state of defence, loathing his companions, and thinking of the future, since his fortune diminished day by day in these good and brave works, the thought came into his mind of turning friar, which in these times was the most common method of escaping out of embarrassments. But this which would perhaps only have remained a fancy all his life, owing to an accident the most serious which had yet befallen him, became a resolution.

One day he passed through a street of his native city, followed by two bravoës, and accompanied by a certain Cristoforo, who had formerly been an assistant in the shop, but who, since this had been closed, was become steward of the household. He was a man of about fifty, and attached from his youth to Ludovico,

whose birth he had witnessed, and who between his salary and gifts bestowed upon him wherewith not only to live himself, but also enough to maintain and bring up a numerous family. Ludovico observed in the distance a certain signor, an arrogant man, and an oppressor by profession, with whom he had certainly never spoken in his life, but whose cordial enemy he nevertheless was, and who most fully returned his sentiments; since it is one of the advantages of this world to be able to hate and be hated without being personally known to one another. This man, followed by four bravoës, advanced straightforward with a proud step, his head high, his mouth drawn together with arrogance and contempt. Both walked along close to the wall, but Ludovico (pay attention to this) slid along it with his right side, and this, according to an established usage, gave him the right (and where will not a right intrude itself!) not to move away from the said wall in order to make way, let the person be whosoever he might; a thing which was then considered a matter of great importance. The other imagined, on the contrary, that the right should alone belong to him as the noble, and that it was for Ludovico to go into the middle of the street, and this by reason of another usage. However, in this, as in many other affairs, there were two opposite usages in force, without its having been decided which of them was the best, and this gave occasion to warfare every time that one hard head struck against another of the same quality. These two approached each other, drawn close up to the wall, like two walking figures in *basso-relievo*. When they found themselves face to face, the Signor regard-

ing Ludovico, his head thrown back, and with an imperious frown, said to him in a corresponding tone of voice—"Make way!"

"Make way to you!" replied Ludovico; "the right is mine."

"With such as you the right is always mine."

"Yes, if the arrogance of such as you were law to such as myself."

The bravoës of both gentlemen remained each one behind his patron, looking askance at each other, with their hands on their daggers prepared for battle; the populace, who arrived from all sides, held themselves in the background to observe the fray, and the presence of these spectators animated still more the punctilio of the contending parties.

"Into the middle, vile mechanic! or I will teach thee for once how to behave towards a gentleman."

"You lie when you say I am vile."

"Thou liest, saying I lie." (This answer was logic). "And if thou wert a cavalier, like myself, thou shouldst see by the point of my sword that the liar is thou."

"This is certainly a good pretext to exempt yourself from sustaining the violence of your words by deeds."

"Throw this fellow into the mud," said the gentleman, turning round to his people.

"Let us see that!" said Ludovico, stepping back, and laying his hand upon his sword.

"Rash fool!" cried the other, drawing his; "I will break this sword when it shall be stained with thy vile blood!"

In this manner they rushed upon each other; the

servants of both parties flew to the defence of their masters. The combat was unequal by numbers, and also because Ludovico aimed sooner to escape the blows and disarm his antagonist, than to injure him; but the enemy desired his death at any price. Ludovico had already received from one of the braves a dagger-wound in his left arm, and a slight scratch in his cheek, and his principal enemy was laying on most violently behind him, to put an end to his life; when Cristoforo seeing his master in this extreme danger, fell upon the Signor from behind with his dagger. And this one, turning all his anger against his new assailant, ran him through with his sword. At this sight, Ludovico, as though out of his mind with rage, thrust his sword into the body of the Signor, who fell—dead almost at the same instant, with poor Cristoforo. The gentleman's braves, seeing that he had fallen, took to flight in very bad condition; those of Ludovico, hurt and discomforted, seeing no one to oppose, and not wishing to find themselves embarrassed by the people, who already ran that way, took to flight in the opposite direction; and poor Ludovico found himself alone, with his two unfortunate companions at his feet, in the midst of a crowd.

“How has it happened?—There is one—there are two.—He has a wound in his belly.—Who has been killed?—This oppressor!—Oh, holy Maria, what destruction! Who seeks, finds!—Once pays for all!—Even he is done for!—What a blow!—It will be a serious business!—And the other unfortunate!—Mercy!—What a spectacle! Help! Save him, save him!—He's also badly off!—See what a fine trim he's in!—He drops blood from every part!—Escape, escape!—Don't let yourself be taken!”

These words, which more than any others made themselves heard above the confused hum of the crowd, expressed the general opinion; and with counsel came also assistance. The deed had taken place near a church of the Capuchins, an asylum, as every one knows, at that time impenetrable to constables and all that complication of things and people which called itself justice. The wounded murderer, who had almost lost his senses, was conducted or rather carried there by the crowd. The Brothers received him from the hands of the people, who recommended him to them, saying, "He is a good man, who has killed a proud oppressor; he did it in his own defence."

Ludovico had never before shed blood, and although homicide was in those times a thing so common that the ear was accustomed to hear it related, and the eye to witness it, yet still the impression which the sight of the man who had died for him, and of the man who had died by his hand, was new and indescribable; it was a revelation of feelings until then unknown. The corpse of his enemy, the alteration of this countenance, which changed in one moment from menace and fury to the helplessness and solemn quiet of death, was a sight which transformed in one second the soul of the murderer. Dragged along to the convent, he scarcely knew where he was, or what was going forward. When he returned to consciousness, he found himself in a bed of the infirmary, under the hands of the surgeon of the convent (the Capuchins have generally one in each convent), who was arranging lint and bandages upon the two wounds he had received in the encounter. A Father,

whose peculiar duty it was to attend the dying, and who had often had to render this service in the street, was immediately called to the scene of combat. Returned a few moments after, he entered the infirmary, and advancing towards the bed where Ludovico lay, "Console yourself," said he; "at least he has died well. He has charged me to crave for him your pardon, and to bring you his." These words caused poor Ludovico to return entirely to consciousness, and revived more vividly and distinctly the confused sentiments which crowded his mind; sorrow for the friend, consternation and remorse for the blow which had been given by his hand; and, at the same time, an agonizing compassion for the man he had murdered. "And the other?" demanded he anxiously from the Friar.

"The other had expired when I arrived."

Meanwhile, the precincts and every approach to the convent swarmed with a curious populace: but a body of constables having arrived, had made the crowd disperse, and then placed itself in such a manner that no one could leave the convent unobserved. A brother of the dead man, his two cousins, and an old uncle came, moreover, armed, cap-à-pie, with a numerous attendance of bravoos, and paced round the convent, regarding, with an air of threatening disdain, the curious, who did not dare to say, "It was well done," but who had this, nevertheless, written in their countenances.

Scarcely had Ludovico collected his thoughts than he called a Father-confessor, prayed him to seek out the widow of Cristoforo, and to ask pardon, in his name, for all the misery which he had, however

involuntarily, caused her; and at the same time to inform her that he would take upon himself the support of her family. Reflecting then upon his own situation, he felt return more livingly, and more seriously than ever, the idea of becoming a friar—an idea which formerly had passed through his mind. It seemed to him that God himself had placed him in this path, and had given him a sign of His will, in causing him, at this juncture, to arrive at a convent; his resolution was taken. He sent for the Superior, and expressed his desire to him. The Superior replied, that he must guard himself from precipitate resolution, but that if he persisted, this should not be refused him. Then he caused a notary to be sent for, and made a donation of all his remaining property (which was still considerable) to the family of Cristoforo, a sum to the widow as a second dowry, and the remainder to the eight sons which Cristoforo had left behind him.

This resolution of Cristoforo's arrived most opportunely for his hosts, who, on his account, found themselves in a most terrible difficulty. To send him away from the convent, and expose him to the pursuit of justice, that is, to the vengeance of his enemies, was not, however, a line of conduct to be put in deliberation. This would have been the same as renouncing their privileges, discrediting the convent with the populace, drawing upon themselves the censure of all the Capuchins in the universe for having allowed the rights of all to be violated, and exciting against themselves the ecclesiastical authorities, who considered themselves as the guardians of this right. On the other hand, the family of the murdered man

—very powerful in itself, and through its adherents—had prepared to avenge itself, and declared every one an enemy who attempted to place any obstacle in its path. History does not say that they grieved much over their murdered kinsman, nor even that a single tear had been shed over him among all the kindred; it only says that they all were furious to have in their clutches the murderer, either alive or dead. Now his assuming the habit of a Capuchin would accommodate every thing. He made, in a certain manner, an amends—imposed upon himself a penance—declared himself implicitly in fault—retired from every contention—was, in short, an enemy who lays down his arms. The relations of the dead could then, even if it pleased them, believe and boast that he had turned monk through desperation and fear of their anger. At all events, to reduce a man to disinherit himself—to shave his head—to walk barefoot—to sleep upon sack-cloth—to live upon alms—might appear a sufficient punishment to the offended party, even the most proud.

The Superior presented himself with the most dexterous humility before the brother of the dead man, and after a thousand protestations of respect for the very illustrious house, and of his desire to please the family in every thing which was possible, spoke of the penitence of Ludovico, and of his resolution, making gracefully felt that the family might be contented with this, and insinuating then gently, and with a manner even more crafty, that please or not please the thing must be. The brother broke forth into a rage; which the Capuchin allowed to evaporate, saying from time to time, “It is too just a sorrow.”

He gave the Capuchin to understand, that in any situation his family would have known how to take satisfaction, and the Capuchin, whatever he might think, took care not to say no. Finally he demanded and imposed as a condition, that the murderer should immediately quit the city. The Superior, who had already deliberated whether this might be, said that it should be done; leaving the other to believe if it pleased him, that this was an act of obedience, and thus all was concluded. The family, who came off with honour, was satisfied; the Friars, who saved at once a man and their privileges, were satisfied; the lovers of chivalry, who saw an affair terminate in so praiseworthy a manner, were satisfied; the populace, who saw a man to whom they wished well relieved from his embarrassments, and who admired at the same time a conversion, were satisfied; and finally our Ludovico, in the midst of all his grief, was satisfied, and more than all the others satisfied, thus to begin a life of atonement and usefulness, to be able, if not to repair, at least to pay for his evil deeds, and blunt the intolerable sting of remorse. The suspicion that his resolution might be imputed to fear, afflicted him a moment, but he consoled himself quickly that even this unjust judgment would be a chastisement for him, and a means of expiation. Thus, at thirty, he wrapped himself in sack-cloth, and being obliged, according to custom, to renounce his own name and take another instead, he selected one which would remind him of that which he had to expiate, and called himself Cristoforo.

Scarcely had he assumed the robe, than the Superior intimated to him that he would have to perform his

noviciate about sixty miles off, and that on the morrow he must depart. The novice bowed himself profoundly, and demanded a favour: "Permit me, Father," said he, "that before I leave this city, where I have spilt the blood of a human being—where I must leave a family cruelly offended,—that I endeavour to make amends to the family for this affront; or at least shew them my grief for not being able to repair the injury, by demanding pardon from the brother of the murdered man, and if God help my intention, by removing all rancour from his breast." To the Superior it appeared that such a step, besides being good in itself, would serve still more to reconcile the family with the convent, and he went immediately to the Signor to signify to him the request of Fra Cristoforo. At a proposition thus unexpected, the brother felt, together with wonder, an ebullition of anger, yet not without a sentiment of satisfaction. After having thought a moment, "come to-morrow," he said, and assigned the hour. The Superior returned to carry to the novice the desired consent.

The Signor thought immediately, that the more solemn and impressive this satisfaction was, the more he should increase his credit with his kindred and with the public, and knew (to express it with modern elegance) that this would be a beautiful page in the history of his family. He informed in haste all his kindred that to-morrow at noon they should come to him, to receive a general satisfaction. At noon-day the palace was all a-stir with nobles of both sexes and all ages; there was a moving and mingling of great cloaks, of waving plumes, of dangling *Durlindanas*,* an agita-

* *Durlindana* is the name given by Ariosto to Rowland's sword.

tion of starched and crisp frills, an embarrassing trailing of brocaded dresses. The antechambers, the courts, and the street, swarmed with servants, pages, braves, and curious idlers. Fra Cristoforo saw this preparation, and divining well the motive of it, experienced a slight perturbation, but, after an instant, he said to himself,—“It is well; I have murdered him in public, in the presence of many of his enemies; that was the dishonour, this is the reparation.” Thus with his eyes cast down, with the attending Friar at his side, he passed through the door of this palace, crossed the court, between a crowd which regarded him with a very uncereemonious curiosity, ascended the staircase, and passing through the middle of the lordly crowd, which opened before him, followed by a hundred eyes, arrived in the presence of the master of the house, who, surrounded by his nearest of kin, stood erect in the middle of the hall, his eyes fixed upon the ground, his head thrown back, grasping with his left hand the hilt of his sword, whilst with the right he held tightly together, upon his breast, the collar of his cloak.

There is sometimes in the countenance and appearance of a man, such a sudden expression, or what may rather be called such an effusion of the inward soul, that in a crowd of spectators, the judgment regarding this mind will be unanimous. The countenance and appearance of Fra Cristoforo spoke to the bystanders that he had neither become a Friar, nor humbled himself thus, through human fear, and this began to reconcile the crowd to him. When he saw the offended brother, he hastened his step, knelt at his feet, crossed his hands over his breast, and

inclining his shaven head, pronounced these words: "I am the murderer of your brother; God knows that I would willingly restore him to you at the cost of my own blood, but being unable to make you other than ineffectual and tardy excuses, I supplicate you to receive them for the love of God." All eyes were fixed immoveably upon the novice, all ears were directed towards the personage to whom he spoke. When Fra Cristoforo ended, throughout the whole hall rose a murmur of pity and respect. The gentleman, who stood in an attitude of forced dignity, and repressed anger, was troubled by these words, and bending towards the kneeling Brother,— "Rise!" said he, with an altered voice, "the offence—truly, the deed—but the habit you wear—not only from this, but also on your own account—rise, Father—my brother—I cannot deny it—was a cavalier—was a man—a little impetuous—a little hasty—but all happens by the disposal of God. Speak no more of this. But, Father, you must not remain in such a position." And taking him by the arms, he made him rise. Fra Cristoforo risen, but with his head bent, replied, "I may then hope that you have granted me your pardon! And if I obtain it from you, from whom may I not hope for it? Oh, if I could only hear from your lips this word, pardon!"

"Pardon?" said the gentleman, "you have no longer need of it. But since you desire it, certainly—certainly. I pardon you from my heart, and all —"

"All, all!" cried with one voice the bystanders. The countenance of the Friar beamed with a grateful joy, under which, however, still shewed itself an

humble and profound compunction for the evil deed, which the pardon of men could not repair. The gentleman, conquered by this aspect, and carried away by the general emotion, threw his arms round his neck, and gave and received the kiss of peace.

A "bravo! well done!" burst forth from all parts of the hall; all were in motion, all pressed round the Frate, servants immediately arrived with a copious supply of refreshments. The gentleman again approached Cristoforo, who seemed about to take leave, and said to him,—“Father, accept something; give me this proof of your friendship.” And he began to serve him before any one else; but the Friar drew back with a certain friendly resistance, saying, “These things are no longer for me; but it shall never be said that I refused your gifts. I am going to set forth on my journey, vouchsafe to order me a little loaf of bread, so that I may be able to say that I have enjoyed your charity, that I have eaten of your bread, that I have a sign of your pardon.” The gentleman much affected, ordered this to be done, and immediately a chamberlain arrived in gala costume, carrying a little loaf upon a silver dish, and presented it to the Father, who, taking it and returning thanks, placed it in his basket. He then took leave; and after embracing the master of the house again, and after all those who were near him had seized upon him, he succeeded in disengaging himself; he had to combat in the antechamber, in order to free himself from the servants, and even from the bravoës, who kissed the hem of his robe, his cord, and his hood; and he found himself in the street carried along as in triumph, and accompanied by a crowd even to the

gate of the city, through which he passed, and commenced his pedestrian journey towards the place of his noviciate.

The brother and the relations of the murdered man who had expected this day to experience the miserable joy of pride, found themselves instead filled with the serene joy occasioned by pardon and benevolence. The company conversed some time with an unusual kindness and cordiality, in speeches which no one was prepared for in going there. Instead of satisfaction taken, of injuries avenged, engagements cancelled; praises of the novice, reconciliation and mildness were the themes of conversation. And a certain one who for the fiftieth time would have related how the Count Murzio, his father, had managed upon a famous occasion to subdue the Marquis Stanislao, who was a bully as every one knows, spoke instead of the penitence and admirable patience of a Fra Simone, dead many years before. The company departed, the master still much disturbed, examining with himself with wonder what he had heard, and all that he himself had said, muttered between his teeth—"the devil of a friar!"—(we must transcribe his precise words)—"the devil of a friar!—had he remained much longer there on his knees, why I myself should have craved pardon that it was my brother he had murdered!" Our history expressly notices that from this day forth, this Signor was a little less hasty, and a little more tractable.

Father Cristoforo travelled on with a satisfaction which he had never felt since that terrible day, for the atonement of which his life should be consecrated. The silence prescribed to the novices he observed

without being aware of it, absorbed as he was in the thoughts of the fatigues, of the privations, and humiliations which he had gone through, in order to deduct from his guilt. Stopping at the hour of refection at the house of a benefactor, he ate with a kind of delight his bread of pardon; but nevertheless spared a morsel of it, and placed it again in his basket, in order to preserve it as an eternal remembrance.

It is not our design to give the history of his conventual life. We will only say that he always fulfilled with great pleasure and with great care, the duties which were prescribed him, those of preaching and assisting the dying; and that he never allowed any opportunity to escape him of conciliating differences, and of protecting the oppressed,—duties which he himself had imposed. In this humour entered, without his being aware of it, something of his old habits, and a remnant of his warlike spirit, which humiliations and mortifications had not been entirely able to efface. His language was generally calm and humble; but when justice or truth were attacked, he became at once animated with his ancient impetuosity, which, moderated and mingled with a solemn emphasis arising from his habit of preaching, gave his language a singular character. His manner, as well as his appearance, announced a long struggle between a fiery and impetuous nature and an opposing will, habitually victorious, always upon its guard, and directed by superior motives and inspirations. A brother and friend who knew him well, compared him one day to those words too expressive in their original form, which certain persons, otherwise well educated, half pronounce, when carried away by passion, changing

some letters; words, however, which spite of the metamorphosis remind you of their primitive energy.

If a poor unknown girl in the sad situation of Lucia had demanded the aid of Father Cristoforo, he would have immediately flown to her assistance; but as it was Lucia who was concerned, he hastened with all the more solicitude, since, besides knowing and admiring her innocence, he already imagined her danger, and felt a holy indignation against the base persecution of which she was become the object. Besides, having counselled her, as the least evil course to pursue, not to trouble herself and to remain quiet; he feared now that this counsel might have produced some bad effect, and to the christian solicitude which was inherent in him, joined itself in this instance that scrupulous fear, which often torments the good.

But whilst we have been relating the acts of Father Cristoforo, he has reached and appeared upon the threshold. The women, leaving the handle of the spindle, which they made spin and scream, are risen, saying both together, "Father Cristoforo! God be with you!"

CHAPTER V.

FATHER CRISTOFORO paused on the threshold; and scarcely had he cast a glance at the women, than he perceived that his presentiments were not false. Then in that tone of interrogation which goes to meet a sad reply, raising his head with a slight movement backwards, he said, "Well?" Lucia replied by a deluge of tears. The mother commenced making excuses "for having dared;" but the Friar advanced, seated himself upon a three-legged stool, and cut short all the excuses by saying to Lucia, "Calm yourself, my poor child; and you," said he at length to Agnese, "relate to me what this is." Whilst the good woman related as well as she could the sad history, the Friar became a thousand colours; sometimes he struck his feet on the ground, sometimes he raised his eyes to heaven. The history ended, he covered his face with his hands, and cried, "O blessed God! till when—" but without finishing the phrase he turned again towards the two women—"Unfortunate ones," said he, "God has visited you. Poor Lucia!"

"You will not abandon us, my father?" said Lucia sobbing.

"Abandon you! Great God! And with what countenance should I dare to demand anything for myself when I should have abandoned you in this

condition? you whom He has confided to me? Do not lose courage, He will assist you; He sees all; He can make use also of a man of nothing, like myself, in order to confound a—— We will see, we will think what can be done.”

Saying this, he supported his left elbow upon his knee, resting his forehead in the palm of the hand, and with the right grasped his beard and his chin, as though to hold firm and united all the powers of his mind. But the most attentive consideration only served to shew him more distinctly how pressing and full of intrigue the affair was. “Make Don Abbondio ashamed, and shew him how much he had failed in the performance of his duty? Shame and duty are nothing to him when he is afraid! Make him afraid? What means have I to cause him a greater fear than that which he has of a carabine? Inform the Cardinal Archbishop of all, and invoke his authority? That requires time. And in the meanwhile? And then? And even should this unfortunate innocent be a wife, would that be any check upon this man? Who knows how far this may go? Resist him? And how? Ah, if I could only,” thought the poor brother, “if I could only exchange my brethren who are here for those of Milan! But it is not an affair which concerns the whole community; I should be abandoned. This man appears the friend of the convent; he gives himself out as a partisan of the Capuchins; and have not his satellites come more than once to shelter themselves with us? I should find myself alone in the business; I should be treated as an embroiler, as an intriguer, as a quarreller; and what is more, I might perhaps, by an attempt out of season, render worse

the condition of this unfortunate girl." Having balanced the for and the against of both sides of the question, the wisest course appeared to him, to go straight to Don Rodrigo himself, and turn him from his infamous purpose by prayers, by the terrors of the next life, nay, even by those of the present, if this were possible. At the worst, by these means he could at least learn more clearly how obstinate Don Rodrigo was in his brutal enterprise, and discover something more of his intentions, and thereupon take counsel with himself.

Whilst the Friar was thus meditating, Renzo, who, for reasons which every one divines, could not remain far from the house, had appeared; but seeing the Father absorbed in his reflections, and the women making a sign that he should not disturb him, he remained silent upon the threshold. The Brother, raising his head in order to communicate his design to the women, observed him, and saluted him in a manner which expressed an habitual affection, rendered still more intense through pity.

"They have told you—my father?" Renzo asked with a voice which betrayed his emotion.

"Only too much, and it is on that account that I am here."

"What do you say of this scoundrel?"

"What dost thou wish I should say of him? He is not here, and what good would my words do? I say to thee, my dear Renzo, confide in God, and God will not abandon thee."

"Your words are blessed!" cried the young man. "You are not one of those who always injure; but the Signor Curato and the Signor Doctor——"

“Do not recall what only can serve to torment yourself uselessly. I am a poor friar, but I repeat again what I have said to the women; weak as I am, I will not abandon you.”

“O you are not like the friends of this world! The deceitful ones! Who would have thought it, after all the protestations they made me in the good times! Ah! ah! they were ready to give their blood for me; they would support me against the very devil. If I had an enemy, I had only to speak; he would not long eat bread. And now if you saw how they draw back——” Here the orator raising his eyes towards the countenance of the Father, saw that it had become clouded, and perceived that he had said something which he had better have kept unsaid. But, wishing to repair his fault, he went on embarrassing himself, and getting himself into further difficulty. “I would say—I don’t intend——, that is, I would say——”

“What would’st thou say, and how? Thou hast then commenced spoiling my work, before it was undertaken? It is happy for thee that thou hast been undeceived in time. What! thou wentest in search of friends—what friends? Friends who even wishing to assist thee would not have been able! And thou dost seek to lose the only one who can and will assist thee! Dost thou not know that God is the friend of the afflicted who confide in him? Dost thou not know that the weak never gained by violence? And when even,” and here he pressed tightly Renzo’s arm, and his aspect without losing its authority became animated with a solemn compunction, he cast down his eyes, his voice became slow and hollow, “And when even

it is accomplished, it is a terrible gain ! Renzo, wilt thou confide in me ? Why do I say in me, a poor weak friar ? Wilt thou confide in God ?”

“ O yes !” replied Renzo, “ He is truly the Lord.”

“ Well, promise me that thou wilt affront no one, that thou wilt provoke no one ; that thou wilt allow thyself to be guided by me.”

“ I promise this.”

Lucia heaved a deep sigh, as though a heavy weight had been removed from her heart, and Agnese said, “ Well done, my son !”

“ Listen, children,” continued Fra Cristoforo ; “ I shall go to-morrow to speak to this man. If God touches his heart, and gives strength to my words, all will go on for the best ; if otherwise, He will find another remedy. You, in the mean time, remain quiet, keep yourselves out of the way, avoid speaking, and do not shew yourselves. This evening, or to-morrow at the farthest, you will see me again.”

Having said this, he cut short their thanks and benedictions, and set out. He directed his steps towards the convent ; arrived there time enough to chant the psalms in the choir, dined, and set out again on his way to the den of this wild beast which he had to tame.

The little castle of Don Rodrigo rose isolated like a fortress, upon a summit of one of the cliffs which break up this coast. To this indication the Anonymous adds (he would have done better to have boldly given the name), that it was beyond the village of the Betrothed, distant about three miles from the village, and about four from the convent. At the foot of the cliff, on the side which looks towards the lake, lay

a little heap of huts, inhabited for the most part by the vassals of Don Rodrigo; and this was like the little capital of his little kingdom. It was sufficient to pass by to become perfectly acquainted with the condition and habits of the peasantry. Casting a glance into the rooms on the ground-floor, there, where some door was open, you saw suspended, *pêle-mêle*, upon the wall, arquebuses, spades, rakes, straw-hats, nets, and powder-horns. You only met robust and well-built men, whose foreheads were covered by a *ciuffo* confined in a net; old men who, having lost their teeth, seemed ready to bite with their gums those who had scarcely provoked them; women with masculine features and arms ready to come to the succour of their tongues on the first good occasion; even the appearance and movements of the children, who played in the road, had an indescribable something of decision and provocation.

Fra Cristoforo traversed the village, climbed a little winding path, and arrived on a small esplanade before the castle. The door was shut: this was a sign that the master was at dinner, and would not be disturbed. The few small windows which looked into the road, fastened in badly joined frames, which were falling to pieces from age, were nevertheless defended by large iron bars; and those on the ground-floor were so high, that a man mounted upon the shoulders of another, would have had trouble to reach them. A great silence reigned here; a passer-by could have believed this an abandoned habitation, if four creatures, two living and two dead, posted symmetrically on the outside, had not given an indication of inhabitants. Two great vultures suspended by the head,

their large wings spread open, one despoiled of his feathers and half consumed by time, the other still firm and quite covered with his plumage, were nailed one upon each door-post; and two bravoës, stretched all their length, each one on the bench placed right and left of the portal, on guard, waiting to be called to partake of the refuse of their lord's table. The Father stopped short, with the manner of one who is disposed to wait; but one of the bravoës rose and said to him—"Advance, Father; here they never make Capuchins wait; we are friends of the convent. I have found myself in certain moments when the air of the street was too hot for me; and if you had kept the door closed, my affairs would have gone on badly enough." Saying this he struck two blows with the knocker. This noise was answered immediately from the interior by the barking and cries of mastiffs and little dogs. A few moments after, an old servant arrived, grumbling between his teeth; but as soon as he saw the Father, he made him a very profound reverence, silenced the dogs both by gestures and by his voice, introduced Cristoforo into a narrow court, and reclosed the door. Having then conducted him into a little hall, and regarded him with an air of surprise and respect, he said—"Are you not Father Cristoforo of Pescarenico?"

"Precisely so."

"You here?"

"As you see, my good man."

"It will be to do good; good," continued he murmuring between his teeth, "can be done everywhere." They traversed together two or three little dark rooms, and arrived at the door of the banqueting-hall.

Here was heard a great and confused noise of knives and forks, goblets and plates, and, above all else, discordant voices, which strove to surpass each other. The Brother wished to retire, and stayed at the door debating with the domestic to be left in some corner of the house until the dinner should be over, when the door opened. A certain Count Attilio, who was seated just opposite (he was a cousin of the master of the house, and we have already made mention of him, without naming him, however), having seen a shaven head and a frock, and having perceived the modest intention of the good Father—"Eh, eh!" he cried, "you do not escape us, reverend Father,—approach, approach!"

Don Rodrigo, from I do not know what confused presentiment, could have very well dispensed with this visit, the motive of which he did not precisely divine; but since the blunderer Attilio had already made this loud call, it was not for him to deny it, and he therefore said, "Come, Father, come!" The Father advanced, saluted the master, and replied with both hands to the salutes of the revellers.

One pleases oneself generally (I do not say that every one does) in imagining an honest man appearing before a wicked one with his head erect, his glance assured, his heart proud, and his words bold. But yet, in truth, to enable him to assume this attitude, such a concurrence of circumstances is necessary, that this is very seldom the case. On this account, then, you must not be surprised if Fra Cristoforo, spite of the good testimony of his conscience, the firmest persuasion of the justice of the cause which he came to sustain, and with a mingled sentiment of horror and

compassion for Don Rodrigo, remained standing with a certain air of timidity and submission in the presence of this same Don Rodrigo, who was seated there at the head of his table, in his own house, in his own domain, surrounded by friends, by homage, by so many signs of his power, and with an air which made a prayer die in the mouth, let the petitioner be whosoever it might, even were this prayer neither a counsel, a reproof, nor a reproach. On his right hand sate the Count Attilio his cousin, and, if it is needful to say, his companion in debauchery and lawless deeds; he was come from Milan, to pass some days in the country with him. On his left, and on the opposite side of the table, sate, with a great respect, tempered, nevertheless, with a certain presumption, the Signor Podestà, the same who ought properly to have rendered justice to Renzo, and have forced Don Rodrigo to desist. Opposite to the Podestà, in an attitude of the most pure and profound respect, sate our Doctor Azzecca-Garbugli, in a black cloak, and with a nose more rubicund than usual. *Vis-à-vis* the cousins, two obscure guests, of whom our history only says that they did nothing but eat, incline their heads, smile, and approve of every thing said by one guest when this was not contradicted by another.

“Hand the Father a seat,” said Don Rodrigo.

A servant presented one, and Father Cristoforo seated himself, making many excuses to the Signor for having come at so inopportune a moment. “I should like to speak to you quite alone, upon an——affair of importance,” said he in a low voice in Don Rodrigo’s ear.

"Well, well, we will speak about it; but in the meanwhile bring some wine for the Father."

The Father wished to excuse himself, but Don Rodrigo, elevating his voice in the midst of the hubbub which had recommenced, cried, "No, by Bacchus! you shall not do me this affront; it shall not be said that a Capuchin went out of this house without having tasted of my wine, or an insolent creditor without having felt the wood of my forests." These words were followed by a general burst of laughter, and interrupted for a moment the question which was being warmly agitated among the guests. A servant brought upon a silver waiter a flagon of wine and a deep goblet in the form of a chalice, and presented it to the Father, who, not daring to resist so pressing an invitation from the man whom he had so much need to render favourable towards him, no longer hesitated to pour out, and began slowly to sip his wine.

"The authority of Tasso does not support your opinion, reverend Signor Podestà; it is even against you," shouted the Count Attilio in reply, "since this learned and great man, who had all the rules of chivalry at his finger ends, has made the messenger of Argante, before carrying the challenge to the Christian knights, demand license for it from the pious Godefroy de Bouillon."

"But this is a mere addition, a poetical ornament; since the messenger is inviolable by his nature, by the law of nations, by the *jure gentium*; and, without going so far, the proverb says also, '*The ambassador beareth no blame*,' and proverbs, you know, Signor Conte, are the wisdom of nations."

“The messenger having said nothing in his own name, but having merely presented the cartel in writing ——”

“But when will you comprehend that the messenger was a daring ass who did not know the first——”

“With the permission of these gentlemen,” interrupted Don Rodrigo, who did not wish that the discussion should go too far, “we will refer the question to Father Cristoforo, and stand by his decision.”

“Good, very good!” said Count Attilio, to whom it appeared a very amusing thing to have a question of knighthood decided by a Capuchin; whilst the Podestà, more obstinate at heart about the question, became silent at the same instant, with a certain look which seemed to say, ‘poor youths!’

“But from what I think I have understood, these are not things of which I ought to have any knowledge.”

“The usual modest excuses of the Father,” said Don Rodrigo; “but you will not escape me. Ah! we know well that you did not come into the world with the hood on your head, and that the world has known you. Come, come; here is the question ——”

“The fact is this,” began to shout Count Attilio.

“Leave me to relate it, who am neutral, Cousin,” replied Don Rodrigo. “Here is the history. A Spanish cavalier sent a challenge to a cavalier of Milan; the bearer not finding the provocator at home, gives the challenge to the brother of the cavalier; this brother reads the challenge, and for answer gives the bearer a beating. The question is ——”

“Very well applied,” cried the Count Attilio; “it was a true inspiration ——”

"Of the demon," added the Podestà. "Beat an ambassador! a sacred person! You also, Father, will tell me whether this is a knightly action?"

"Yes, Signor, a knightly action," cried the Count, "and leave it to me to decide; to me, who ought to know what is befitting a cavalier. O if it had been with the fist, that would have been another thing; but a stick can dirty nobody's hands. But what I cannot understand is, how you can interest yourself so much about the shoulders of a rascal ——"

"Whoever spoke about the shoulders, Signor Conte mio? You make me say things which never came into my mind. I have spoken of characters, and not of shoulders. I speak of the laws of nations in general. Tell me only, I beg, if the heralds whom the ancient Romans sent to carry their challenges to other nations demanded permission to open their embassy; and only find me one author who makes mention of a herald who has been beaten."

"What have the customs of the ancient Romans to do here? People who did not trouble themselves about ceremony, and who in these things were horribly behindhand. But according to the laws of modern chivalry, which is the true chivalry, I say and I maintain, that a messenger who puts a challenge into the hands of a cavalier without having demanded permission from him, is a rash fellow, liable to be fallen upon, extremely liable to be fallen upon,—liable to be beaten, extremely liable to be beaten."

"Answer a little to this syllogism."

"Nothing, nothing, nothing!"

"But listen—but listen—but listen! To strike an unarmed man is an act of treason. *Atqui*, the messenger, *de quo*, was without arms, *ergo* ——"

"Gently, gently, gently, Signor Podestà."

"How gently?"

"Gently, I tell you. What have you just now said? It is an act of treason to strike any one from behind with a sword, or to shoot him in the back; yet even for this there may be certain cases. But let us keep to the point. I grant that this may generally be reputed an act of treason; but to give a cudgeling to a rascal! It would indeed be beautiful were one obliged to say to him, 'beware of the cudgel,' as one says to a gentleman, 'hand to your sword.' And you, reverend Signor Doctor, instead of making grimaces and smiling in order to give me to understand that you are of my opinion, why do you not sustain my reasoning with your tongue, which is as good as lost, when I want you to aid me in driving some reason into the head of this Signor?"

"I ——" replied the Doctor, rather confused, "I enjoy this learned dispute; and I am grateful for the happy accident which has given me occasion to listen to so graceful a war of intellect. Besides, it is not for me to pronounce sentence. His very illustrious Lordship has already delegated a judge. Here is the Father ——"

"It is true," said Don Rodrigo; "but how will you that the judge should speak, when the litigants will not keep silence?"

"I am mute," said the Count Attilio.

The Podestà pressed together his lips, and raised his hand as in sign of resignation.

"Thank heaven! And now you, Father," said Don Rodrigo with a serious yet half-jeering air.

"I have already excused myself in saying that I

do not understand these things," replied Father Cristoforo, returning his glass to a domestic.

"Bad excuses!" cried the two cousins; "we will have the sentence."

"Since it is so," replied the Brother, "my humble advice would be, that there should be neither challenges, nor messages, nor beatings."

"O that is monstrous!" said Count Attilio. "Pardon me, Father, but that really is monstrous. One sees you do not know the world."

"He?" said Don Rodrigo; "you wish to make me laugh. He knows it, cousin mine, as well as you; is it not true, Father? Say, have you not already made your apprenticeship?"

Instead of answering to this very amiable demand, the Father said secretly to himself, "This concerns thee; but recollect, Brother, that thou art not here for thyself, and that all that concerns thee alone does not enter into the affair."

"It may be," said the cousin; "but the Father—what is the Father's name?"

"Father Cristoforo," replied more than one.

"But, Father Cristoforo, my most reverend master, with your maxims you would turn the world upside down. Without challenges! without beating! Adieu the point of honour! Impunity for all rascals! But, fortunately, the supposition is impossible."

"Courage, Doctor," cried Don Rodrigo, who always wished to divert the dispute from the two original combatants, "courage; now let us hear you, who for persuading people are unequalled. Let us hear how you can convince the Father Cristoforo."

"In truth," replied the Doctor, brandishing his

fork in the air, and turning round to the Father, "in truth, I cannot understand how Father Cristoforo, who is at the same time a perfect religious man and a man of the world, does not perceive that his advice, which is good, excellent, and of just weight in the pulpit, is worthless—be it said with due respect—in a knightly dispute. But the Father knows better than I do, that every thing is good in its place; and I believe this time he has wished to extricate himself by a joke from the embarrassment of pronouncing sentence."

What could be replied to reason deduced from wisdom thus ancient and always new? Nothing; and this is what our Friar did.

But Don Rodrigo, in order to cut short this question, introduced another in its stead: "*à propos*," said he, "I have heard say that at Milan, there are rumours of accommodation."

The reader knows that in this year the succession to the Dukedom of Mantua was disputed. At the death of Vincenzo Gonzaga, who had left no legitimate male heir, the duchy had fallen into the possession of the Duke de Nivers, his nearest relation. Louis XIII., or rather the Cardinal de Richelieu, wished to support him, since he was his favourite, and a naturalized Frenchman; Philip IV., or rather the Count d'Olivares, commonly called the Count-Duke, did not desire this for the very same reasons, and had excited war against him. Then, as this duchy was a fief of the empire, both parties employed all sort of underhand proceedings, plots and menaces, with the Emperor Ferdinand II.; the first, in order that he should give the investiture to the new duke,

the second, that he should refuse it him, and aid in driving him out of the state.

“I am not far from believing,” said Count Attilio, “that things may be arranged. I have certain indications ——”

“Believe nothing, Signor Conte, believe nothing,” interrupted the Podestà. “Upon this point I have knowledge, since the Signor Spanish Governor, who has the goodness to wish me well, and who, by being a son of a favourite of the Count-Duke, is informed of every thing ——”

“I tell you that I happen every day at Milan to speak with persons of a much higher consideration; and I know from a good quarter that the Pope, interested as he is for peace, has made propositions ——”

“It ought to be thus; the thing is in rule. His Holiness does his duty. The Pope ought always to work good between Christian princes; but the Count-Duke has his line of policy, and ——”

“And, and, and Signor mio, do you know what in this moment is the thought of the Emperor? Do you believe that there is only Mantua in the world? The things about which he has to think are many, Signor mio. Do you know, for example, how far, at this moment, the Emperor can confide in his Prince Valdistano, or Vallestai, or, what do you call him? and if ——”

“The true name in the German language is Vagliensteino, as I have heard it pronounced more than once by our Signor Governor, who is a Spaniard; but be of good cheer, nevertheless ——”

“Will you teach me ——?” returned the Count; but Don Rodrigo cast a glance, giving him to under-

stand that for love of him he should cease to contradict the Podestà. The Count was silent; and the Podestà, like a ship disengaged from a sand-bank, continued with full sails in the course of his eloquence. "Vagliensteino troubles me but little, since the Count-Duke has an eye upon every one, and an eye everywhere; and if Vagliensteino should be capricious, he will know how to make him keep to the straight road, with either good or bad. He has an eye upon all, I tell you, and a long arm; and if he has made up his mind, as he has done now, and wisely too, the great politician that he is, that the Signor Duke de Olivares shall not set foot in Mantua, he will not set foot there, and the Signor Cardinal Richelieu will have made a hole in the water. He makes me inclined to laugh, this dear Signor Cardinal, who wishes to contend against a Count-Duke, an Olivares. Upon my word I should like to be born again two hundred years hence, to see what posterity will say to this fine pretension. Other things are necessary besides envy; a head is necessary, and there is but one such head in the world as the Count-Duke's. The Count-Duke, gentlemen," continued the Podestà, still bearing away before the wind, and a little astonished even himself to meet with no rock; "the Count-Duke is an old wolf, speaking with due respect, which will make the hunter lose his track, let him be whosoever he may; and when he inclines to the right, you may be sure he will attack on the left; and thus it is that no one can ever boast of knowing his designs, and even those who must execute them, even those who write his despatches, do not understand anything. I have been able to speak of these things with some knowledge

of these affairs, since this brave man, the Spanish Governor, deigns to converse with me with some confidence. The Count-Duke, on the contrary, knows what boils in the pot at every court; and all these famous politicians (and that there are among them some very clever ones one cannot deny) have scarcely imagined a design, before the Count-Duke has already divined it, with his good head, his covered ways, and with his snares laid for all. This poor, good man, the Cardinal Richelieu, probed here, smelt out there, sweats, exerts himself, and for what? When he has succeeded in digging a mine, he finds that a counter-mine is already beautifully and well made by the Count-Duke ——”

Heaven only knows when the Podestà would have set foot on shore; but Don Rodrigo, instigated by his cousin's look of sufferance, signed to a servant that he should fetch a certain flask.

“Signor Podestà,” said Don Rodrigo, “and you gentlemen, a health to the Count-Duke, and you will afterwards be able to tell me whether the wine is worthy the personage.” The Podestà answered by a bow, through which might be observed a sentiment of personal gratitude, since he considered as intended for himself every thing that was either said or done in honour of the Count-Duke.

“May Don Gasparo Gusman, Count of Olivares, Duke of San Lucca, Great Privato of King Philip the Great, our Signor, live a thousand years!” said he, raising the goblet.

Privato, it may be remarked for the benefit of those who are unacquainted with the word, was the Italian expression then in use for a favourite of a king.

“ May he live a thousand years ! ” responded all.

“ Serve the Father,” said Don Rodrigo.

“ Excuse me, I have already committed an excess, and I could not —— ”

“ How ? They drink the health of the Count-Duke,” said Don Rodrigo ; will you make us believe you are for the *Navarrini* ? ”

This was the name then given in insult to the French, on account of the Princes of Navarre, who had begun to reign over them with Henry IV. Thus conjured, he was obliged to drink. All the guests broke forth in exclamations and praises of the wine, with the exception of the Doctor, who by the movements of his hand, the winkings of his eyes, his compressed lips, expressed his admiration better than he could have done by words.

“ Eh ! what do you say, Doctor ? ” demanded Don Rodrigo.

Drawing forth from the goblet a nose which the wine had rendered even still more vermilion and shiny, the Doctor replied, dwelling upon every syllable with great emphasis : “ I say, pronounce, and opine, that this wine is the Olivares of wines ; *censui, et in eam iwi sententiam*, that a liquor like it is not to be found in the two-and-twenty kingdoms of the king, our master, whom God guard ! I declare and hold that the repasts of Signor Don Rodrigo surpass the suppers of Heliogabalus ; and that famine is banished for ever from this palace, where splendour sits and reigns.”

“ Well said, well defined ! ” cried the guests. But this word famine, which the Doctor had let fall by chance, turned in the same moment all thoughts to

this sad subject, and all conversed about the famine. On this subject, all, or nearly all, were of one accord, but the clamour was almost greater than if they had been of contrary opinions; all spoke at once. "There is no famine," said one; "it is the monopolists ——"

"And the bakers," said another, "who conceal the grain; hang them."

"Exactly so; hang them without mercy."

"Good trials!" cried the Podestà.

"What trials?" cried still louder the Count Attilio, "summary justice! Seize three or four, or five or six of those whom the public voice singles out as being the richest and the greatest dogs, and hang them."

"Examples! examples! Without examples nothing can be done!"

"Hang them, hang them! And then grain will spring up on all hands!"

If in passing through a fair you have ever enjoyed the harmony caused by a troop of Merry-Andrews, when between one sonata and another each one tunes his instrument, making it shriek as much as he can, so as to hear it distinctly in the midst of the thundering and squeaking of the others, you can form an idea of the melody of this discourse, if discourse one may call it. They continued pouring out this wine again and again; its praises became, as was natural, mingled with sentences of jurisprudence, so that the words most frequently heard were, *ambrosia* and *hang them!*

Don Rodrigo cast glances, from time to time, at the only one who sate silent; he saw him still, firm, without any token of impatience or haste, giving no sign which tended to recall he was waiting, yet still

with the air of one who does not intend to leave without being heard. He would willingly have sent him away without a hearing, but to dismiss a Capuchin without granting him an audience, was not according to the rules of his policy. Thus, since he could not escape from the enemy, he resolved to front him, and deliver himself as quickly as possible. He rose from table, and with him all the rubicund troop, without, however, interrupting their shouts. Demanding permission from his guests, he approached with a courteous air the Friar who had risen with him, and said, "I am ready to wait upon your commands," and conducted him into another hall.

CHAPTER VI.

“In what can I obey you?” said Don Rodrigo, planting himself in the middle of the hall. Such was the sound of the words, but the manner with which they were uttered said clearly, remember before whom thou art, weigh thy words and be brief.

To give courage to our Fra Cristoforo, there was no means more sure or more speedy than to assume an arrogant manner. He who stood wavering, hunting after words, and making the heads of his rosary slip quickly between his fingers, as though he hoped to find his exordium in one of them, at this haughtiness of Don Rodrigo felt more words rise to his lips than he had need of. But thinking how important it was not to spoil the affairs of others, he corrected and tempered the phrases which had presented themselves to his mind, and said, with a humble circumspection:—

“I am come to propose an act of justice, to supplicate an act of charity: certain people of ill fame have made use of the name of your illustrious lordship in order to frighten a poor curate, and deter him from performing his duty, as well as to torment two innocent young people. Your lordship with one word can confound these men, restore to the law its force, and console them to whom so cruel a violence has been done; you can do this, and being able; your conscience, your honour ——”

“ I will speak to you about my conscience, when I shall come to confess myself to you. As to my honour, you ought to know that of it I am the guardian, and I alone, and that I regard as a foolhardy and impertinent knave any one who shall take upon himself to divide this care with me.”

Fra Cristoforo, warned by these expressions that the Signor sought to draw the worst meaning out of his words in order to turn the discourse into a dispute, and thus not to give him time to come to an explanation, devoted himself all the more to patience, and resolving to swallow whatsoever the other might choose to say, answered immediately, in a tone of submission: “ If I have said anything which has displeased you, certainly it was contrary to my intention. Correct me, reprove me, if I do not know how becomingly to address you; but deign to listen to me. For the love of heaven, and of that God before whom we all must appear ——,” saying these words, he took between his fingers and raised before the eyes of his frowning auditor, the little skull which was attached to his rosary, “ do not be obstinate in refusing a justice so simple, and which you owe so much towards these poor people. Think that God has his eyes upon them, and their prayers are heard on high. Innocence is powerful before His ——”

“ Ah, Father!” interrupted Don Rodrigo, roughly, “ the respect which I bear towards your robe is great, but if anything could make me forget this, it would be to see it upon the back of one who has the audacity to come into my house to play the spy.”

These words made the colour mount suddenly into the Friar’s cheeks; but with the air of one who swal-

lows a very bitter medicine, he replied,—“ You do not believe that such a title suits me. You feel in your own heart that the step which I now take here, is neither vile nor despicable. Listen to me, Don Rodrigo, and heaven forbid that the day may come in which you will repent of not having listened to me. Do not place your glory——and what glory, Signor Don Rodrigo! what glory before men and before God! You can do much here on earth; but——”

“ You know,” said Don Rodrigo, interrupting him with anger yet not without horror; “ you know that when the fancy seizes me to hear a sermon, I can go to church, as other people do; but in my own house! Oh!” continued he, with forced irony, “ you do me too much honour. A preacher in my house! It is only princes who have them.”

“ And this God, who demands accounts from princes of that Word which he makes them hear in their palaces; this God, who gives you now a sign of his mercy in sending one of his ministers, an unworthy and miserable one, but his minister nevertheless, to pray for an innocent girl ——”

“ In short, Father,” said Don Rodrigo, in the act of leaving the room, “ I do not know what you would say. I understand nothing, except that there is some girl who interests you very much. Go and make your confidential communications to those whom they please, and do not any longer take the liberty of wearying a gentleman.”

At this movement of Don Rodrigo, our Friar had placed himself before him, but with great respect, and raising his hands as though to implore and direct him at the same time, continued—“ She interests me

it is true, but not more than you do; they are two souls, both of which interest me more than my own life. Don Rodrigo, I can do nothing for you, but pray to God; but this I will do from my heart. Do not say no to me; do not keep in agony and terror a poor innocent girl. A word from you can do all."

"Well," said Don Rodrigo, "since you believe I can do so much for this person, and since this person lies so near your heart ——"

"Well?" demanded anxiously Father Cristoforo, who, spite of Don Rodrigo's tone and manner, did not abandon the hope which his words seem to announce.

"Well, counsel her to come and place herself under my protection. She shall want for nothing, no one shall dare to molest her, or I am not a cavalier."

At such a proposition the indignation of the Friar, until then repressed with great difficulty, broke forth. All his fine projects of prudence and patience went off in smoke. The old man found himself in accord with the new man, and in circumstances such as this Fra Cristoforo was truly worth two. "Your protection!" exclaimed he, taking two steps backwards, planting himself firmly on his right foot, placing his right hand upon his hip, raising the forefinger of the left towards Don Rodrigo, and fixing his two flaming eyes upon his countenance—"Your protection! It is well that you have spoken thus, that you have made me such a proposition. You have filled up the measure, and I fear you no more."

"How dost thou speak, Friar?"

"I speak as one who speaks to a man abandoned by God, to one who can no longer cause fear. Your

protection! I know well that this innocent is under the protection of God; but you! you now make me feel this with so much certainty, that I have no longer need to spare you in speaking of it. Lucia, I say, see how I pronounce this name with an unabashed mien, and unmoving eyes ——”

“How! In this house ——”

“I have compassion for this house, a curse hangs over it. Do you expect that divine justice will regard four walls and the suggestion of four bullies? You have imagined that God has made a creature after his own image, in order to give you the pleasure of tormenting it? You have imagined God would not know how to defend it? You have despised His warnings. You are judged. The heart of Pharaoh was hard like yours, God knew how to break it. Lucia is safe from you, I tell you, poor friar as I am; and as to yourself, hear well what I promise you; a day will come ——”

Don Rodrigo had until then remained, between rage and astonishment, unable to find a single word. But as he thus heard a prediction thundering over his head, a secret and mysterious fear joined itself to his anger.

Suddenly staying this menacing hand, and elevating his voice to cut short this terrible prophecy, he cried. “Out of my sight, vile, insolent, hooded poltroon!” These words thus clear, calmed in an instant Father Cristoforo. To the idea of injury and disdain was for so long a time, and so nearly associated the idea of sufferance and silence, that at this compliment his anger and enthusiasm fell, and no other resolution remained, except that of listening tranquilly to all

that it might please Don Rodrigo to add. Therefore, removing quietly his hand from the Signor's grasp, he bowed his head, and remained immoveable, as when the wind falling in the midst of a tempest, a tree tossed about in the storm, settles its branches, and receives the hail as heaven sends it.

"Unmannerly villain!" continued he. "Thou expressest thyself like thy equals; but return thanks to the sack which covers thy beggar's shoulders, and saves them from the caresses which one bestows upon those who resemble thee, in order to teach them to speak. Out with thee!" And, saying this, he opened, with an imperious and contemptuous air, a door opposite to the one by which they had entered. Father Cristoforo bowed his head, and went out, leaving Don Rodrigo to measure with hasty steps the field of battle.

When the Brother had closed the door behind him, he saw in the room he had entered a man retiring very quietly along the wall, so as not to be seen in the hall where the conversation had taken place. He recognised in him the old servant who had come to receive him at the portal. This man had served forty years in this house, that is before Don Rodrigo was born, for he had entered the service of the old lord, who was quite another kind of man. The old Signor being dead, and the new master dismissing all the family and forming quite a new household, had, however, retained this old servitor, who, although aged, and of maxims and habits quite different to his own, compensated for these defects by two good qualities; a high opinion of the dignity of the house, and a great practice in ceremonial, the most ancient

traditions and minutest particulars of which he knew better than any one else. In the presence of the Signor, the poor old man would never have dared to let his disapprobation of the scenes he every day witnessed be observed, much less have expressed it. He scarcely allowed exclamations and reproaches to escape his lips, even when among his fellow-servants. They, however, amused themselves at his expense, and took pleasure sometimes in touching this note, in order to make him say more than he would have wished, and to hear him sing the praises of the former mode of life in this house. These censures, however, never reached his master's ears, unless accompanied by the relation of the many jokes which had been occasioned by them, so that they became for Don Rodrigo rather a subject of amusement, than of anger. But upon days of invitation and reception, the old servant became a very serious and important personage.

Father Cristoforo seeing him, saluted him, and continued his way; but the old man approached him mysteriously, placed his forefinger upon his lips, and then with the same made a sign inviting him to enter a dark passage. Arrived there, he said in a low voice, "Father, I have heard all, and I want to speak with you."

"Speak quickly, good man."

"Not here. Woe to me, if my master should perceive—but I know many things, and I will come to-morrow to the convent."

"Is there any design?"

"That there is something in the air is certain, I have already been able to perceive *that*,—but now

I shall be on the watch, and I shall know all,—leave that to me. I am obliged to hear and see things—strange things; I am in a house—but I wish to save my soul.”

“The Lord bless you!” and pronouncing these words in a low voice, the Brother placed his hands upon the head of the old servitor, who, although much older than Fra Cristoforo, bent before him like a child. “God will recompense you,” continued he, “do not fail to come to-morrow.”

“I will come,” replied the servitor; “but set off quickly, and—for the love of heaven—don’t betray me.” Saying this and looking behind him, he entered by another door of this passage a little hall, which opened into the court. Having seen the coast clear, he called to the good friar to come forth, whose countenance replied to the old man’s last words more clearly than protestations could have done. The servitor opened the door, and he without another word went forth.

This domestic had listened at his master’s door. Had he done well? Had Father Cristoforo done well in praising him for this? According to the most ordinary and generally received rules, this was a very dishonourable action; but may not this case be regarded as an exception? And are there not exceptions to the most absolute of rules? These are questions for the reader to solve if it please him. As for us, we do not pretend to give advice, it is enough to have to recount facts.

Having turned his back upon this house of horrors, Fra Cristoforo breathed more freely; he hastened on quickly towards the descent, his face on fire, excited

and agitated as one can well imagine from what he had both heard and said. But this unexpected meeting with the old servant was a great restorative to him. It appeared to him as though God had given him a visible sign of protection. Here is a thread, thought he,—a thread which Providence places in my hand; and in this very house too! And without even my dreaming of searching for it. Whilst he was thus ruminating, he raised his eyes towards the west, and saw the setting sun, which had already touched the summit of the mountain, and thought that but little of the day remained for him. Then, although he felt his bones bruised and heavy from the various exertions of the day, he hastened his pace so as to carry intelligence, such as it was, to his protégées, and then to arrive at the convent before nightfall; since this was one of the laws the most absolute and most rigorously maintained by the code of the Capuchins.

During this time, in Lucia's cottage projects had been started, of which it is necessary to inform the reader. After the departure of the friar, the three remained for some time silent. Lucia prepared sorrowfully the dinner; Renzo was on the point of leaving every moment, so as to remove himself from the sight of her affliction, and yet he was unable to tear himself away; Agnese, apparently, was only occupied with the reel which she made spin round, but in fact she was maturing a project,—and when this was matured, she broke silence in these terms—

“Listen, children! If you will have sufficient courage and address, if you will confide in your mother (this *your* made Lucia ponder), I engage

myself to draw you out of this difficulty, better perhaps, and more speedily, than Father Cristoforo himself, although he is such a man."

Lucia stood still and regarded her with a countenance which expressed more astonishment than confidence in such a magnificent promise.

Renzo cried suddenly, "Courage? address? Only tell me what there is to do!"

"Is it not true," continued Agnese, "that if you were married it would be a fine advance, and that we should be able more easily to find a remedy for the rest?"

"Who doubts this?" said Renzo. "Were we married—all the world is our country; and at two steps hence beyond Bergamo, he who can work in silk is received with open arms. You know how many times Bartolo, my cousin, has solicited me to go there to stay with him, where I should make my fortune as he has done; and if I have never given heed to him—it is—why need I to tell? it was because my heart was here. Married, we can go there all together, keep house there, and live in holy peace, out of the clutches of this rogue, removed from all temptation to commit a folly. Is it not true, Lucia?"

"Yes;" said Lucia, "but how?"

"I have said how!" returned the mother, "courage and address, and the thing is easy."

"Easy!" exclaimed the two at once, to whom the thing had become so strangely and sadly difficult.

"Easy, knowing how to manage it," replied Agnese. "Listen attentively to me, and I will endeavour to make you comprehend it. I have heard said by people who understand these matters, and I have seen

a case of this kind myself, that in order to perform a marriage, a curate is certainly necessary, but that it is not necessary that he consent to it; it is sufficient if he be only there."

"How is that?" demanded Renzo.

"Listen, and you will comprehend. It is necessary to have two witnesses very agile, and both of accord. You go towards the priest. The point is to seize him unexpectedly before he has time to escape. The man says, 'Signor Curato, this is my wife;' the woman says, 'Signor Curato, this is my husband.' It is only necessary that the curate hears, and that the witnesses hear, then the marriage is as firm and sound as though the Pope himself had performed it. When these words are once uttered, the curate may scream, may storm, may play the devil,—it is all useless, you are man and wife."

"Is it possible!" exclaimed Lucia.

"How?" said Agnese. "Do you expect that I have learnt nothing in the thirty years which I passed in the world before you were born? The thing is as I tell you. For example, one of my friends, who wished to marry against the will of her parents, doing in this manner, obtained her desire. The curate, who had some suspicion, stood upon his guard; but the two witnesses managed so cleverly, that the lovers pronounced the words just in the right moment, and were man and wife, although the poor child repented before three months were past."

Agnese had spoken the truth regarding the possibility, and regarding the fear of not succeeding in it; since no person had recourse to this expedient, except such as had met with obstacles and refusals in

the ordinary course. The clergy were very careful to escape from this forced co-operation; and when one of them happened to be surprised by such a couple, accompanied by witnesses, he endeavoured by every means in his power to escape from them, like Proteus from the hands of those who wished to make him prophesy by force.

“If this were true, Lucia?” said Renzo, regarding her with an air of supplicating expectation.

“How, if it were true?” returned Agnese. “And you also believe I tell lies? I torment myself for you, and then I am not even believed! Good, good, extricate yourselves as you can. I wash my hands of the affair.”

“Ah, no! do not abandon us,” said Renzo; “I speak thus because the thing appears to me to be excellent. We are in your hands. I consider you as my veritable mother.”

These words caused the slight anger of Agnese to disappear, caused her also to forget a resolution which, in truth, was not serious.

“But why then, mother,” said Lucia with her submissive look, “why then did not this come into Father Cristoforo’s mind?”

“Come into his mind?” replied Agnese; “dost thou imagine it did not come into his mind? But he would not speak of it.”

“Why?” demanded both the young people at the same time.

“Because, because—since you wish to know—the clergy say it is a thing which is not good.”

“How can it be a thing which is not good, and yet be good after it is done?” said Renzo.

“What do you wish me to say?” replied Agnese. “They have made the laws as it pleased them, and we poor people cannot understand every thing. And then how many things—— For instance, it is like giving a Christian a blow with your fist; it is not *good*; but when you have given it him, not even the Pope can remove it.”

“If this is a thing which is not good, one must not do it,” said Lucia.

“What?” said Agnese. “I will counsel thee, perhaps, against the fear of God! If this were contrary to the will of thy relatives, if it were to marry a good-for-nothing fellow; but the marriage pleases me, and it is to take this good youth. He who causes all these difficulties is a scoundrel, and the Signor Curato——”

“It is so clear that every one can understand it.”

“There is no need to speak of this to Father Cristoforo before it is done,” continued Agnese; “but done, and successfully done too, what dost thou think the Father will say to thee?—‘Ah, daughter, this is a foolish thing that thou hast done!’ Friars must always speak thus. But believe, nevertheless, that in the bottom of his heart he will be satisfied—even he.”

Lucia, without finding anything to answer to their reasoning, did not, however, appear convinced; but Renzo, quite encouraged, said, “If it is thus, the thing is done.”

“Gently,” said Agnese; “and the witnesses? How to find two who will and can remain silent? And then how to catch the Signor Curato, who for two days has remained in the house? And then how to

keep him there? For, although he may be of a heavy nature, I tell you that, as soon as he sees you appear in this manner, he will become as nimble as a cat, and will escape from you like the devil from holy water."

"I have found the way! I have found it!" said Renzo, striking his fist upon the table until he made the dinner things dance again; and thereupon he expounded his project to Agnese, who entirely approved of it.

"These are stratagems," said Lucia; "this is not open dealing. Until now we have acted sincerely; let us continue to act with faith, and God will assist us. Father Cristoforo has told us this; let us listen to his advice."

"Allow thyself to be guided by those who know more than thou," said Agnese, with a grave air. "What need is there to ask advice? God says, 'help thyself, and I will help thee.' We will relate all to the Father, when it is done."

"Lucia," said Renzo, "will you now disappoint me? Have we not acted like good Christians? Ought we not already to have been man and wife? Had not the Curate fixed the day and the hour? And where is the crime, if we are now obliged to assist ourselves with a little address? No, you will not disappoint me. I go, and shall return with the answer." And saluting Lucia with a supplicating air, and Agnese with an air of intelligence, he sets forth in haste.

Tribulation sharpens the intellect. Renzo, in the straight and even path which he had until then trode, had never had occasion to sharpen his, but in this

circumstance he imagined a stratagem which would have done honour to a lawyer. He went straight, as he had projected, to the cottage of a certain Tonio, who was his neighbour. He found him in the kitchen, with one knee on the hearth, holding the handle of a pot placed on the hot ashes, stirring with a bent spoon a *polenta* of buck-wheat. The mother, brother, and wife of Tonio, were seated round the table; and three or four little children crowded round their father waiting, with their eyes fixed on the pot, the moment of emptying it. But there was not here that joyous air which the sight of dinner ought to occasion those who have earned it by their labour. The quantity of the pudding was in accordance with the times, and not with the number and desire of the guests. Each one regarded the common dish with a grim look of rabid love, and seemed to think of the portion of appetite which would still remain over to him. Whilst Renzo exchanged greetings with the family, Tonio poured out the pudding into the wooden dish which stood ready to receive it, and it appeared a little moon in a great circle of vapour. Nevertheless the women said courteously to Renzo, "Will you partake with us?" a compliment which the peasants of Lombardy (and who knows of how many other countries?) never fail to make to whosoever happens to be present at a meal, should the invited be a rich gourmand risen but that moment from table, and the peasant reduced to his last mouthful.

"I thank you," replied Renzo; "I am only come to say a word to Tonio; and if thou wilt, Tonio, not to disarrange the women, we will go and dine at the public-house, and talk there." The proposition was

all the more agreeable to Tonio, since it was so little expected, and the women and also the little lads (upon this subject children early begin to reason) did not see without pleasure a competitor, and the most formidable one too, remove himself away from the pudding. The invited one did not stay to demand his share, but set off with Renzo.

Arrived at the public-house, and seated at their ease in perfect solitude, for the misery had cleared away all frequenters of this place of delights, and when he had ordered the little which the place afforded, and a bottle of wine to be brought, Renzo said, with an air of mystery, to Tonio, "If thou wilt render me a little service, I will render thee a greater."

"Speak, speak; only command me," replied Tonio, pouring out the wine; "I would throw myself into the fire for thee to-day."

"Thou art in debt five-and-twenty *lire* to the Signor Curato, for the rent of his field which thou hadst last year."

"Ah, Renzo, Renzo! thou spoilest thy liberality. What hast thou just now said? Thou hast driven away my good humour."

"If I speak of this debt," said Renzo, "it is because, if thou wilt, I intend giving thee the means of paying it."

"Dost thou really say that?"

"Really! Shalt thou be satisfied?"

"Satisfied? *Perdiana!* whether I shall be satisfied? Yes, if it were only no longer to see the ugly faces, and signs with the head, which the Signor Curato makes every time we meet! It is always Tonio,

recollect! Tonio, when shall I see thee about this little affair? And it is now come to such a pass, that in the pulpit, when he fixes his eyes upon me, I always fear he is going to say in public,—‘Well these five-and-twenty *lire*, Tonio!’ Cursed be these five-and-twenty *lire*! And then he will have to return me the gold necklace of my wife, which he would change into so much pudding; but ——”

“But, if you will render me a little service, the five-and-twenty *lire* are ready.”

“Speak quickly.”

“But,” said Renzo, laying his fore-finger on his lips.

“Is there need of this? Thou knowest me.”

“The Signor Curato has assigned certain bad reasons for delaying my marriage, and I, on the contrary, want to hasten it. I have heard that two betrothed presenting themselves before him with two witnesses, and saying, this is my wife, and Lucia saying, this is my husband,—that then the marriage is good and firm. But hast thou understood me?”

“Thou wishest me to go as witness?”

“Precisely so.”

“And thou wilt pay the five-and-twenty *lire* for me?”

“I intend to do so.”

“He is a vagabond who neglects to do this.”

“But it is necessary to find another witness.”

“I have found him; my poor simpleton of a brother, Gervano, will do anything I tell him. Thou wilt pay him in drink?”

“And in eating too,” returned Renzo. “We will bring him with us here to make merry.”

“ I will teach him; thou knowest also that I have received his share of brains!”

“ To-morrow.”

“ Good.”

“ Towards evening.”

“ Very good?”

“ But ——,” said Renzo, placing his fore-finger again upon his lips.

“ Bah ——!” returned Tonio, inclining his breast towards his right shoulder, and raising his left hand with an air which said, ‘ thou do’st me injustice.’

“ But if thy wife should ask thee, as she will doubtless ——”

“ I owe my wife some lies, and so many that I do not know whether ever I shall be able to balance accounts. I will find some little lie to put her heart in peace.”

“ To-morrow morning we will talk more fully about this, so as better to understand every thing.”

With this they left the hostelry; Tonio returned home to study the lie which he should tell the women, and Renzo to give account of the measures concerted.

In this interval, Agnese had wearied herself in vainly endeavouring to persuade her daughter, who opposed to every phrase, now this, now that horn of her dilemma, “ either it is a bad action, and, therefore, one ought not to do it; or it is not a bad action, and, therefore, why not communicate it to Father Cristoforo?” Renzo arrived all triumphant; he made his report, and terminated it by an “ *ahn?* ”—a Milanese interjection, which signifies, am I, or am I not a clever fellow? Could you find a better? Should you

have ever had this idea? and a hundred other similar things.

Lucia shook her head gently; but the other two paid no attention to this; but behaved as people are accustomed to do towards a child whom they despair of persuading, but whom they will at length be able to lead, either by prayers or authority, to do all that is required of him.

“That is well,” said Agnese, “that is very well; but you have not thought of every thing.”

“What is wanting?” demanded Renzo.

“Perpetua! You have not thought of Perpetua. She will easily let Tonio and his brother enter; but you! but you two!—Only think of this! She has doubtless stricter orders to keep you away from the Curate, than a little lad from a pear-tree laden with ripe fruit.”

“How shall we manage?” said Renzo, somewhat troubled.

“Here it is; I have thought of it:—see, I will go with you. I have a secret to attract her with, and enchant her in such a manner that she will never perceive you, and you can enter. I will call her. I will touch a string. You shall see.”

“Heaven bless you!” cried Renzo. “I have always said you were our good angel in every thing.”

“But all this helps nothing,” said Agnese, “if you cannot persuade this girl, who persists in saying that this is a sin.”

Renzo brought his eloquence into the field, but Lucia would not let herself be moved.

“I do not know what to answer to your arguments,” said she, “but I see that, in order to do this

thing as you say, it is necessary to employ subterfuge, lies, fraud. I wished to be your wife,"—it was not possible for her to pronounce this word, or express this intention, without the crimson mounting to her cheeks,—“I wished to be your wife by the straight road, in the fear of God, and before the altar. Let us leave all things on earth to His direction; do you not think that He will know better how to assist us, than we should with all this falseness? And why make a mystery of it to Father Cristoforo?”

The dispute had already lasted long, and did not yet appear nearly ended, when a hasty sound of sandals, and a noise of an agitated robe, like that of the wind in spread sails, announced Father Cristoforo. They became silent, and Agnese had scarcely time to whisper in Lucia's ear, “Take care and don't tell him anything!”

CHAPTER VII.

FATHER CRISTOFORO arrived in the condition of a good captain, who having lost, but not through his own fault, an important battle—afflicted, but not discouraged, thoughtful, but not cast-down, in retreat, but not in flight—goes where necessity calls him, to defend the menaced positions, to reassure his troops, and to give new orders.

“Peace be with you,” said he entering; “there is nothing to be hoped for from man; therefore it is all the more needful to confide in God. I have already a token of His protection.”

Although none of the three had hoped much from this attempt of Father Cristoforo, since to see a powerful man withdraw from an oppression without being obliged to this by force, and through mere condescension to unarmed prayers, was a thing rather unheard of than rare; yet this sad certainty was a blow to them all. The women sorrowfully bowed their heads; but in Renzo’s mind, anger prevailed over dejection. This news found him already embittered by many painful surprises, useless attempts, and deceived hopes, and above all, he was irritated by Lucia’s resistance.

“I should like to know,” cried he, grinding his teeth, and raising his voice as he had never before dared to do in the presence of Fra Cristoforo, I should

like to know what right this man has to maintain that my wife ought not to be my wife!"

"Poor Renzo!" replied the friar, with a grave and compassionate voice, and a look which gently commanded peace. "If the powerful, who wish to commit injustice, were always obliged to give their reasons, things would not go on as they do now."

"Has he said then, this dog, that he does not wish it, because he does not wish it?"

"He has not even said that, my poor Renzo! It would still be an advantage, if, in order to commit injustice, it were necessary to confess it openly."

"But he must have said something; what has he said, this firebrand of hell?"

"I have heard his words, and yet I cannot repeat them to thee; the words of a wicked man who is strong, penetrate, and pass away. He can be angry, that thou shouldest be suspicious of him; and yet, at the same time, make thee feel that thy suspicions are founded; he can insult, and call himself the offended party; can commit an outrage, and demand satisfaction; cause fear, and yet complain; be insolent, and yet without blame,—but no more. This man has neither pronounced the name of this innocent, nor thine; he has not even appeared to know you; he has not said he intended anything; but—but, I have only been too well able to comprehend that he is inflexible. Nevertheless, have confidence in God. You unfortunate ones, do not lose your courage, and thou, Renzo—Oh! believe nevertheless that I can put myself into thy place, that I feel all that passes in thy soul. But patience! It is a vain word, a bitter word for those who do not believe; but wilt

thou not grant God, one day, two days, the time he will take to make justice triumphant? Time belongs to him, and he has already granted us much. Leave all to God, Renzo; and hear, hear all of you, that I have already a thread in my hand to assist you. For the moment I cannot tell you more. To-morrow I shall not come here, I must remain all day at the convent on your account. And thou, Renzo, endeavour to come to me; or if by any unforeseen accident thou canst not, send me a trusty man, a messenger of sense, by whom I can send you word what happens. Night is coming on, I must hasten towards the convent. Faith, courage, and adieu."

Saying this he went out in haste, and set forth almost running, along the winding and stony pathway, so as not to arrive late at the convent, and thus risk the drawing down upon himself a severe reprimand, or what he would have thought much more of, a penance, which might prevent him next day from being ready to do all that the service of his portegés required from him.

"You have heard what he has said, of I do not know what—— of a thread which he has to assist us," said Lucia. "We must confide in him; he is a man who, if he promised ten——"

"If there is nothing else——" interrupted Agnese, "he ought to have spoken more clearly, or have called me aside, and told me what this is."

"Foolish talk! I'll finish it, I'll finish it!" interrupted Renzo this time, walking up and down the room with a voice and a look which left no doubt regarding the meaning of his words.

"O Renzo!" cried Lucia.

"What will you say?" cried Agnese.

“Is it necessary to say? I will finish it, I will; had he a thousand devils in his soul, he is but flesh and blood at last, even he!”

“No, no, for the love of heaven!” began Lucia, but tears stifled her voice.

“These are not becoming words, even in joke,” said Agnese.

“In joke!” cried Renzo, suddenly pausing right before Agnese, who was seated, and fixing two flashing eyes upon her. “In joke! You shall see whether it is in joke!”

“O Renzo!” said Lucia, sobbing, “I have never seen you thus!”

“Do not say these things, for the love of God,” replied again in haste Agnese, lowering her voice. “Do you not remember how many arms he has at his command? And even though——God help us!——towards the poor, there is always injustice!”

“I will do this justice! I will do it! It is already time. The thing is not easy, I know that well enough myself. This dog of an assassin guards himself well; he knows what he is; but no matter, patience and resolution, and the moment arrives. Yes, I myself will do the justice. I will deliver the country; how many people will bless me!—and then in there springs——”

The horror which Lucia felt in hearing these decided words, suspended her weeping and gave her courage to speak. Raising her tearful countenance from her hand, she said to Renzo in a sorrowful yet resolute voice, “It matters then no longer to you to have me for a wife—I promised myself to a young man who feared God; but a man who should have—

were he secure from justice and vengeance—were he the son of the king——”

“Well!” cried Renzo with a more excited look than ever, “I shall not have you, but *he* shall not have you either! I without you here—— and he in the house of——”

“Ah, no! for charity! Do not speak thus, do not look thus! No, I cannot see you thus,” cried Lucia, weeping and supplicating him with clasped hands, whilst Agnese called the youth by his name, and caressed his shoulders, his hands, his arms, so as to calm him. He remained immoveable and sad, as though touched for a moment by Lucia’s supplicating face, then all at once looked at her sideways, stepped back, and extending his arm and forefinger towards her, cried, “Yes, she—she wishes to have him! He shall die!”

“And I, what evil have I done you, that you should make me die?” said Lucia, throwing herself on her knees.

“You!” said he in a voice which expressed a very different anger, but still anger. “You! What good do you wish me? What proof have you ever given me? No,—have I not prayed, prayed, prayed, and you—what is your answer? No! No! No!”

“Yes, yes!” replied Lucia quickly. “I *will* go. Return to your former project, I will go.”

“You promise me?” said Renzo with a voice and a look become suddenly more humane.

“I promise you.”

“You have promised me.”

“Lord, I thank thee!” exclaimed Agnese doubly content.

In the midst of his great anger, had Renzo thought of what profit Lucia's fear might be to him? And had he not adopted a little artifice to increase it, and make it bring forth good fruits? Our author protests he knows nothing of this, and I believe that even Renzo himself did not well know. The fact is, that he really was furious against Don Rodrigo, and that he evidently desired Lucia's consent. When two passions dispute together in the heart of a man, no one, not even the patient himself, can distinguish one voice from another, and say with security which voice predominates.

"I have promised you this," replied Lucia with a gentle and timid accent of reproach, "but you have promised also to make no scandal, to relate this to Father Cristoforo——"

"Ah, come! For love of whom was I in a rage? Will you now draw back, and play me a silly trick?"

"No, no," said Lucia, beginning to grow frightened again; "I have promised, and I shall not draw back. But only see how you have made me promise! God grant that——"

"Why will you foretell evil, Lucia? God knows we do ill to no one."

"Promise me that this scene shall be the last."

"I promise you, on the word of an honest man."

"But this time keep your word then," said Agnese.

Here the author professes to be ignorant of another thing, whether in truth Lucia were sorry to have been thus forced to consent. We, like him, leave the thing in doubt.

Renzo would have liked to prolong the conversation, and arrange completely what had to be done

the following day; but it was already dark, and the women wished him good-night, since it did not appear to them advisable that at this hour he should stay longer conversing with them.

The night, however, to all the three, was as good as a night could be, which succeeded a day full of agitations and misfortunes, and preceded a morrow destined to an important enterprise, the issue of which was so uncertain. Renzo was seen early in the morning, and concerted with the women, particularly with Agnese, the great operation of the evening, suggesting and removing alternately the difficulties, foreseeing the mischances, describing now one, now another, just as one should relate a thing which had already taken place. Lucia listened, and without approving with words that which she could not approve of in her heart, promised to do the best she could.

“Will you go down to the convent to speak to the Father Cristoforo, as he told you to do last evening?” Agnese demanded of Renzo.

“The pest!” returned he; “you know what sharp eyes the Father has, he would read in my face as in a book, what thing this is we have got in the air; and if he began to question me, I should never come off well. And then I ought to stay here to see after these affairs. It would be better to send some one.”

“I will send Menico.”

“That will do very well,” returned Renzo, and he left the house to look after his affairs, as he had said.

Agnese went to a neighbouring house to seek Menico, who was a little boy of about twelve years old, of a very lively disposition, and who, by way of cousins and sisters-in-law, became, in a certain degree,

a nephew of hers. She asked him as a loan from his parents, "for a certain service," as she said. Having obtained her nephew, she conducted him into her kitchen, gave him breakfast, and told him to go to Pescarenico, and present himself before Father Cristoforo, who would send him back with an answer when it should be proper time. "The Father Cristoforo, that fine old man, thou knowest him well, with the white beard, he whom they call the holy —"

"I know," said Menico, "the one who caresses all the little boys, and gives them sometimes a little saint."

"Exactly so, Menico; and if he should tell thee to wait some time near the convent, do not stray away, and take care and don't go with the other little boys on the lake, nor go to see the fishing, nor amuse thyself with the nets fastened on the walls to dry, nor play any other of thy usual pranks —"

"Pooh, aunt! I am no longer a child."

"That is right, be prudent; and when thou returnest with the answer——look, these two beautiful new *parpagliole* are for thee."

"Give them me now."

"No, no; thou wouldst amuse thyself with them. Go and behave well, and then thou shalt have still more."

The remainder of this long morning certain unusual things were observed, which excited not a little suspicion in the minds of the already uneasy women. A beggar, who was neither thin nor ragged like his equals, and had a certain indescribable something of dark and sinister in his appearance, entered to demand

alms, casting here and there the glances of a spy. A morsel of bread was given him, which he received, and put into his pocket with an ill-disguised indifference. He then began to converse with a certain effrontery, and yet with hesitation; asking many questions, to which Agnese always hastened to give a reply contrary to the truth. Moving at length, as though he would leave the house, and feigning to mistake the door, he entered the one which led to the staircase, and here he glanced about as much as he could. They cried out from behind—"Eh! Eh! Where are you going, good man? It is this way."

He turned back, went out by the way which was indicated to him, excusing himself with an affected humility and submission, which endeavoured in vain to express themselves in the hard features of his face. After this beggar, other strange countenances, from time to time, continued to shew themselves. It would not have been easy to say what kind of men they were; yet neither could one believe they were what they wished to appear, that is to say, honest travellers. One entered under pretext of inquiring his road; others passing before the door slackened their pace, and stealthily glanced across the little court-yard into the room, like people who wished to see without giving suspicion. At length, about mid-day, this tedious procession ended. Agnese rose from time to time, crossed the court, looked out from the street door towards right and left, and returned saying, "No one," words which she seemed to pronounce, and Lucia to hear, with pleasure, without either the one or the other clearly knowing why. But there remained to both an indescribable disquiet, which

deprived them, and particularly Lucia, of a great part of the courage they had reserved for the evening.

It is right, however, that the reader should know something more precise regarding these mysterious travellers; and in order to inform him of all, it is necessary we should step backwards, and find again Don Rodrigo, where we left him yesterday, alone in a hall of his palace, after the departure of Father Cristoforo.

Don Rodrigo, as we have said, measured backwards and forwards with long strides this hall, on the walls of which hung the portraits of his family for many generations. When he found himself facing one wall, and turned round, he saw opposite, a warrior, his ancestor, the terror of his enemies and his soldiers; stern in his look, the hair short and straight, the moustache pointed, drawn out and standing off from the cheek, the chin oblique, our hero on foot, with his greaves, his cuisses, his brassets, his gloves—all iron; the right hand planted on his hip, the left on the handle of his sword. Don Rodrigo regarded him, and when he arrived beneath this portrait, and had turned round again, beheld opposite another of his ancestors, a magistrate, the terror of the citizens and of advocates, seated in a great chair covered with red velvet, enveloped in an ample black toga, all black, except a white collar with large bands, and a deal of rich sable fur thrown about him, (this is the distinguishing sign of senators, and alone worn by them in winter, and this, therefore, is the reason why one never sees the portrait of a senator in a summer dress); pale and frowning, he holds in his hand a petition, and seems to say, “we will see.” There a matron,

the terror of her waiting-women; there an abbot, the terror of his monks; all people, in short, who living, had caused terror, and who dead, still inspired it by their portraits. At the sight of such memories he became still more angry, was ashamed of himself, and could find no rest since a Friar had dared to appear before him in the character of Nathan. He formed a design of vengeance, abandoned it; thought how at the same time he could satisfy his passion and that which he called his honour; and sometimes (mark this!) hearing the commencement of the prophecy still sounding in his ears, he resigned his rage, and was on the point of renouncing these two ideas of satisfaction. At length, however, in order to do something, he called a servant, and ordered him to make his excuses to the company, saying that he was occupied with urgent business. When the servant returned to relate that the gentlemen were gone, leaving their respects, "And the Count Attilio?" demanded he, still continuing his walk.

"He is gone out with these gentlemen, illustrious Signor."

"Good; six men of attendance for a walk; quickly my sword, my cloak, my hat, quickly."

The servant retired, answering by an inclination, and a few instants after returned carrying a richly worked sword, which his master girded on, his cloak, which he threw over his shoulders, and his great hat with feathers, which he proudly placed on his head—all signs of a troubled sea. He set forth, and found at the door the six bravoës all armed, who, having made way and saluted him, followed behind. Prouder, more supercilious, more frowning than usual, he left

the palace, and walked towards Lecco. The peasants and artizans, seeing him come, retired close up to the wall, there pulling off their hats and making him profound bows, which he did not return. Those, who by these peasants were called Signors, bowed before him like inferiors, since in this country there was not one within a thousand miles who could compete with him in name, riches, and adherents, or in the will of being served by all, in order to be at the head of every thing; these he answered with a reserved courtesy. This day it did not so happen, but when he did chance to meet the Spanish governor the bow of both parties was equally profound, it was as between two potentates who have nothing to divide, but who through propriety do honour to each other's rank.

To pass away the morning, and to oppose to the image of the Friar, which besieged his mind, other and quite different images, he entered a house generally much frequented, and where he was received with that respectful and affectionate cordiality which is reserved for those men who make themselves much loved, or much hated; when it became night he returned to his palace. In this interval, Count Attilio had returned, and supper was placed on the table, during which Don Rodrigo was thoughtful and spoke but little.

“Cousin, when will you pay me this wager?” demanded Attilio, with a somewhat mocking and malicious air, as soon as the table was cleared and the domestics gone.

“Saint Martin is not yet past.”

“It would be as well that you should pay it immediately, since all the saint days in the calendar will pass before ——”

“That has yet to be seen.”

“Cousin, you wish to play the politician; but I understand every thing, and I am so sure of gaining the wager that I am ready to lay another.”

“Let us hear.”

“I am sure that the Father—the Father—what do I know?—that the Father, in short, has converted you.”

“Here is one of your fine ideas, truly.”

“Converted, cousin, I say converted. For myself, I enjoy it. Do you know what a fine sight it will be to see you with a contrite air and cast down eyes? And what glory for this Father! How proud and contented he will return home! These are not fish which are caught every day, or in every net. Be assured he will cite you as an example, that when upon a mission some distance from home he will speak of your deeds. I seem to hear him!” And here, speaking through his nose, and accompanying his words with exaggerated gestures, he continued in the tone of a preacher. “In a certain part of this world, which for good reasons I will not name, lived, my very dear brethren, and still lives a dissolute cavalier, a greater friend of women than of honest men, who, wishing to gather of every flower, had cast his eyes ——”

“Enough,—enough,” interrupted Don Rodrigo, half laughing, half annoyed. “If you wish to double the wager, I also am ready.”

“Diavolo! Is it you, then, who have converted the Father?”

“Do not speak to me of this man; and as to the wager, Saint Martin will decide that. The Count’s

curiosity was excited, and he did not spare questions; but Don Rodrigo knew how to elude them all, referring him always to the day which should decide it, not wishing to communicate to the adversary designs which were neither executed, nor yet absolutely fixed.

The following morning woke Don Rodrigo. The apprehensions which "*a day will come*," had excited in his mind, were vanished with the dreams of the night, and there only remained anger irritated by shame for his passing weakness. The more recent images of his triumphant walk, of the bows, of the receptions, and of the sermon of his cousin, had not a little contributed to recal his ancient spirit. Scarcely risen, he commanded Griso to attend him. "Important affairs," said the servant to himself to whom this order was given, since the man who bore this surname was nothing less than the chief of the bravoës, the one to whom were confided the most dangerous and wicked enterprises, the one in whom the master had the most entire confidence, and the one who through gratitude and interest was the most entirely devoted to him. After an assassination, committed in broad daylight in the market-place, he had come to implore the protection of Don Rodrigo, who clothing him in his livery, had sheltered him from every inquiry of justice. Thus engaging himself to commit every fresh crime which was commanded him, he had assured himself of impunity for the first. For Don Rodrigo, this acquisition was of no little importance, since Griso, besides being without comparison the bravest of the band, was also a living example of how much his master had been

able to dare against the laws; so that by this means his power was increased, both by the fact itself and in public opinion.

“Griso,” said Don Rodrigo, “on this occasion we shall see what thou art worth. Before to-morrow this Lucia must be in the palace.”

“It shall never be said that Griso has refused to obey any order of the very illustrious Signor his master.”

“Take as many men with thee as are necessary, order and dispose all as appears best to thee, so that all may succeed; but above all take care that no evil happens to her.”

“Signor, a little fear, so that she may not make too much noise. One cannot do less.”

“A little fear—I understand—that is inevitable. But do not touch a hair of her head, and above all, be in every way respectful to her. Dost thou understand?”

“Signor, one cannot remove a flower from its stem, and bring it to your lordship, without touching it; but only what is absolutely necessary shall be done.”

“Upon thy own security. And how wilt thou manage this?”

“I am thinking of this, Signor. It is fortunate for us that the house lies a little way out of the village. We have need of a place where we can post ourselves, and there is precisely at a little distance this old abandoned house in the midst of the fields,—this house, but your lordship will know nothing of these things. A house which was burnt down some years since, which the owners not having money enough

to repair, abandoned,—and now the witches assemble there; but as it is not their sabbath to-day, I laugh at them. The peasants, who are full of superstition, would not pass by it at night even on a week-day for all the gold in the world. Thus we can lie in ambush, secure that no one will come and spoil our affairs.”

“That is good; and then?”

Here Griso began to propose, Rodrigo to debate, until they both of accord had arranged the manner of carrying out this expedition so as to leave behind no traces of the authors, and then also the manner of directing suspicion through false appearances elsewhere, to impose silence upon Agnese, to inspire Renzo with so great a fear as should make him forget his own grief, the idea of having recourse to justice, nay even his wish to complain, and in short all the other knaveries necessary for the success of the principal knavery. We will cease to recount this long conversation, since the reader will see that the remainder is not necessary to the understanding of our history, and we ourselves are contented not to be obliged any longer to listen to the deliberations of these two tedious rascals.

Suffice it to say, that whilst Griso went out to see about the execution, Rodrigo called him back, and said, “Listen; if by any chance this daring clown should fall into your hands this evening, it would not be amiss to give him, in anticipation, a good warning on his shoulders. Thus the order to keep quiet which will be given him to-day, will better attain its end. But do not seek him out, so as to spoil what is much more important. Thou understandest me!”

“Leave me to act,” replied Griso, bowing with an obsequious yet ostentatious air, and retired.

The morning was passed in walking about to reconnoitre the country. The false beggar who had introduced himself in this manner into the poor cottage was no other than Griso, who came to spy out the land; the false travellers were his rogues, to whom, operating under his orders, a slighter acquaintance with the place sufficed. Having once made the necessary discoveries, they did not allow themselves any more to be seen, for fear of causing suspicion. When they were returned to the palace, Griso made his relation, and arranged definitely the design of the enterprise, assigned to each his part, and gave instructions. All this could not take place without the old servitor, whose eyes were open and whose ears were on the watch, perceiving that some great thing was being plotted. By means of attention and questions, seizing a half indication here, and a half indication there, considering with himself the meaning of an obscure word, interpreting a mysterious action, he managed so well, that at length he understood clearly what should take place in the night. But when he had succeeded, night was not far off, and already a small vanguard of bravoës had set forth to post itself in ambuscade in this desolate house. The poor old man, although he well knew what a hazardous game he played, would not, however, fail in his word. He left the house under the pretext of breathing a little fresh air, and made his way, in the greatest possible haste, towards the convent, in order to give Father Cristoforo the promised information. In a short time the other bravoës put themselves in motion, and dispersed themselves so as not to appear one company. Griso followed afterwards; and now only remained a

litter, which should be carried to the old house when the night was more advanced, which was afterwards done. Assembled again among the ruins, Griso sent three of the bravoos to the hostelry of the village, ordering that one should place himself at the door to observe what movement there was in the street, and watch for the moment when all the inhabitants should be retired to rest; the two others should remain within, playing and drinking like amateurs, being, however, very attentive in spying out anything, if there should be anything to spy out. He and the others would remain ready in ambush.

The poor old man was still trotting along; the three spies arrived at their post; and the sun had already set, when Renzo entered and said to the women, "Tonio and Gervaso wait for me without; I go with them to the public-house to eat a mouthful; when the *Ave-Maria* rings, I shall come and fetch you. Come, courage, Lucia! all depends on one moment."

Lucia sighed and replied, "O yes, courage!" with a voice which belied her words.

When Renzo and his companions arrived at the hostelry, they found the bravo already placed there as sentinel. He obstructed the doorway; his back leaned against the doorpost, his arms crossed upon his breast; he looked and looked again right and left, making gleam now the white and now the black of his ravenous eyes. A flat cap of crimson velvet, placed on one side of his head, covered half his *ciuffo*, which parted over a brown forehead, ended in braids fastened in the nape of his neck with a comb. He held dangling in his hand a cudgel; arms, properly

speaking, he did not seem to bear; but only to look him in the face, a child even would have imagined he had concealed under his clothes as many as he could possibly carry.

When Renzo, who was the first of the three, wished to enter, he, without moving himself, regarded him fixedly; but the youth, careful, like every one who has a difficult enterprise on hand, to avoid dispute, did not even say, "move out of the way," but grazed the other doorpost, passing in sideways, his thigh foremost through the opening left by this *cariatide*. His two companions, in order to enter, were obliged to perform the same evolution. When they entered, they saw the other two of whom we have already spoken, that is the two braves, who seated at a small table played at *mora*, both shouting together, and each one pouring out to drink from a large flask, which stood between them. These two, however, regarded very attentively the newly arrived, and one of them in particular, holding forth a hand, with three great fingers stretched out, and his mouth opened by a great 'six,' which had just issued out of it, measured Renzo from head to foot, winked to his colleague, and then to the bravo at the door, who answered by a nod of the head. Renzo, suspicious and uncertain, regarded these two guests as though he would seek in their appearance an explanation of all these signs, but their appearance only indicated a good appetite. The host looked in his face, as though awaiting his orders. Renzo made him come with him into a neighbouring room, and ordered supper.

"Who are these strangers?" asked he at length in a low voice, when the host returned with a

coarse tablecloth under his arm, and a bottle in his hand.

"I do not know them," said he, spreading the cloth.

"How? Not even one of them?"

"You know well," replied the other, still laying the cloth upon the table, "that the first rule of our business is, never to occupy ourselves with the affairs of others; to such a point is this carried, that not even our women are curious. That would be very raw indeed, considering all the people who come and go; a hostelry is always like a seaport, when the times are good, I would say; but let us be hopeful the good times will return. It is enough for us, if as customers they are gentlemen; afterwards it matters little whether they are really so, or not. Now I am going to bring you a famous dish of *polpette*, you have never before eaten such."

"How can you know —?" continued Renzo; but the host was already on his way to the kitchen, and thus, whilst he took the stewpan of *polpette*, which we have just mentioned, the bravo who had measured our youth, approached him gently, and said in a low voice, "who are these gentlemen?"

"They are good people of the village," replied the host, turning the *polpette* out upon a dish.

"Good; but what are their names? Who are they?" insisted he in a somewhat rough voice.

"One is named Renzo," replied the host, but in a low voice, "a good young man, who is already established, a silk-spinner, who understands his trade very well. The other is a peasant, whose name is Tonio, a good comrade, a gay fellow, pity he has so little

money, he would spend it all here. The other is a poor simpleton, who will eat nevertheless willingly, whenever anything is given him. With your permission ——” And with a spring, he left the stove and his interrogator, to carry the dish to the one who had ordered it.

“How could you know,” commenced Renzo again, as soon as he saw the host reappear; “how could you know they were gentlemen, if you had never seen them before?”

“By their actions, *caro mio*, a man is known by his actions. Those who drink wine without criticising it, who pay their bill without cheapening, who never quarrel with the other guests, and who, if they have to stab any one, go and wait far away from the hostelry, so as never to compromise the poor landlord,—these are gentlemen. Nevertheless, if one can know people intimately as we four know each other, it is better. But what the devil makes you wish to know so many things, when you are betrothed, and ought to have something quite different in your head? and with this polpette before you, which would bring life into a corpse.” Saying this, he returned into the kitchen.

Our author, observing the different manner with which the host satisfied these inquiries, says that he was a man who, in all his discourses, made profession of being the friend of gentlemen in general; but who, in practice, used much more complaisance towards those who had the reputation or appearance of scoundrels. A very singular character, is it not?

The supper was not very gay. The two guests would willingly have enjoyed it completely at their ease, but the invitor, pre-occupied with what the

reader already knows, annoyed, and also rather uneasy regarding the strange behaviour of these unknown individuals, only desired the hour of departure. They spoke in a low voice among themselves, and their words were short and wary.

“What a fine thing,” Gervaso let once escape, “that Renzo wishes to take a wife, and is obliged ——” Renzo assumed a severe look. “Wilt thou be silent, fool?” said Tonio, accompanying the epithet with a nudge of his elbow.

The conversation became still colder; Renzo observing a strict sobriety both in eating and drinking, and pouring out for the other two with discretion, so as to give them a little daring without making them lose their reason. When the supper was over, and the one who had made the least devastation had paid the bill, all three had to pass again before these three faces, which turned round towards Renzo as they had done when he entered. As soon as he was a few steps removed from the hostelry he turned round, and saw that the two whom he had left in the kitchen followed him. He stopped suddenly short with his companions, as though he said, ‘let us see what these people want;’ but the two, when they perceived that they were observed, stood still also, and speaking together in a low voice, turned back.

If Renzo had been near enough to have heard these words,—they would have appeared very strange to him,—“It would, however, be a great honour,” said one of these robbers, “if, returned to the palace, we could relate how in haste we had flattened his ribs, and this of ourselves, without Signor Griso being here to rule.”

“And a fine thing to spoil the principal affair,” said the other. “There, see! he perceives something; he stops to look at us! Ah, if it were only later! Let us return, so as to give no suspicion. See, people are coming from all sides. Let them all go to roost.”

There was, in fact, that hum, that noise, which is heard in an evening in a village, and which, after a few moments, gives place to the solemn calm of night. Women arrived from the fields, their infants clinging round their necks, and holding their elder children by the hand, whom they made repeat their evening prayer; men came with spades and mattocks on their shoulders. On the opening of the doors, you saw gleam here and there the fire lighted for their poor suppers; you heard in the street greetings given and received, and short and sorrowful words regarding the badness of the harvest and the misery of the year; and louder than these words was heard the measured and sonorous tollings of the bell, which announced the close of day. When Renzo saw that these two indiscreet individuals had turned back, he continued his way in the increasing gloom, giving in a low voice now one piece of instruction, now another, now to this brother, now to the other. When they arrived at Lucia's cottage it was already night.

Between the first thought of a hazardous enterprise and its execution (has said a barbarian, who was not entirely deprived of genius*) the interval is a dream, full of phantoms and fears. Lucia for many hours had been in the agony of this dream, and Agnese, Agnese herself, the author of this counsel, was

* Shakspeare.

thoughtful, and could scarcely find words to reassure her daughter. But at the moment of waking, that is, at the moment of action, the mind finds itself quite transformed. To the terror and courage which had disputed there, succeed another terror and another courage. The enterprise presents itself to the mind like a new apparition; that which first was the most dreaded, seems now all at once to become easy, and often the obstacle appears formidable, which before had scarcely been observed; the imagination turns back discouraged, the limbs seem to refuse to obey, and the heart falls short of the promises which it had made with the greatest security. At Renzo's low knock, Lucia was seized with so great a terror, that in this moment she was ready to suffer anything, to be separated for ever from him, sooner than put this resolution into execution; but when he appeared and said, "Here I am, let us set out," when all shewed themselves ready to move off without hesitation, as though it were a thing fixed and irrevocable, Lucia had neither the time nor the strength to start difficulties, and as though forced away, took tremblingly an arm of her mother and an arm of her Betrothed, and thus moved off with the adventurous little band.

Silently, silently through the gloom, and with measured steps, they passed out of the cottage, and took the road beyond the village. The shortest way would have been to traverse the street, which led directly to the house of Don Abbondio; but they chose this road in order not to be observed. Through byways and across gardens and fields, they arrived near this house, and there separated. The Betrothed remained concealed behind an angle of the wall,

Agnese with them, but a little in advance, so as to run in time to stop Perpetua and master her. Tonio, with the foolish Gervaso, who knew how to do nothing by himself, yet without whom nothing could be done, presented himself bravely at the door and knocked.

"Who is there at this hour?" cried a voice from a window which was immediately opened; it was the voice of Perpetua. "There are no sick people that I know of. Some accident has happened, perhaps."

"It is I," returned Tonio, "with my brother, we want to speak with the Signor Curato."

"Is this a christian hour?" replied Perpetua somewhat bluntly. "What discretion! return to-morrow."

"Listen; I will return, or I will not return. I have recovered I do not know how much money, and I am come to pay this little debt which you know about. I have here five-and-twenty beautiful *berlinghe* quite new; but if this cannot be, patience, I shall know how to spend them, and I will return when I shall have laid up others."

"Wait, wait! I go, and shall return immediately. But why come at this hour?"

"I have received this money but just now, and I thought, as I tell you, that if I kept them to sleep with me, I did not know of what opinion I might be to-morrow morning. However, if the hour does not please you, I don't know what to say; for myself I am here, and if you don't want me, I will go back."

"No, no; wait a moment, I will return with the answer."

Saying this, she closed the window. Here Agnese separated herself from the Betrothed, and saying in a low voice to Lucia, "Courage! it is only a moment, it is like having a tooth drawn," joined the two brothers before the door, and began talking to Tonio, so that Perpetua, returning and seeing her there, should believe that she had passed by, and that Tonio had detained her for a moment.

CHAPTER VIII.

"CARNEADES! who was this man?" said Don Abbondio to himself, seated in his great chair in an upper room, a great book open before him, when Perpetua entered to lay before him this embassy. "Carneades! it seems to me that I have either heard or read this name; it must be a learned man, a wise man of ancient times; it is one of those names; but who the devil was this Carneades?"—So far was the poor man from foreseeing the tempest which was gathering over his head.

It is necessary to know that Don Abbondio amused himself with reading a little every day; a curate, his neighbour, who had a small library, lent him one book after another, the first which came to hand. The one upon which in this moment Don Abbondio meditated, convalescent from the fever of fear, even more restored (as far as the fever was concerned than he wished to be imagined), was a panegyric in honour of San Carlo, pronounced with much emphasis, and listened to with much admiration in the cathedral of Milan two years before. The saint was compared, on account of his passion for study, to Archimedes; so far Don Abbondio had found no difficulty, since Archimedes did such wonderful things, and made himself so much talked about, that to know some little about him it is not necessary to have a very

vast erudition. But after Archimedes, the orator called Carneades into the comparison; and it was here that the reader remained run aground. At this moment Perpetua entered to announce the visit of Tonio.

“At this hour?” said also Don Abbondio, as was very natural.

“What would you have?” People have no discretion; but if you don’t catch him soaring——”

“If I don’t catch him now, who knows when I shall be able to catch him? Let him in. Ah, ah! but are you quite sure that it is Tonio himself?”

“Diavolo!” replied Perpetua, who descended; then opened the door and said, “Where are you?” and at the same moment Agnese appeared also, and saluted Perpetua by her name.

“Good evening, Agnese,” said Perpetua, “where do you come from, at this hour?”

“I come from ——,” and here she named a neighbouring village; “and if you only knew,” continued she, “I stayed there precisely on your account.”

“Why?” demanded Perpetua, and turning towards the brothers, said, “enter, I shall come.”

“Because,” replied Agnese, “one of those women who know nothing, yet who must always be talking —can you believe it? persisted in saying that you were not married to Beppo Suolavecchia or Anselmo Lunghigna, because they did not wish to have you. I maintained that you had refused both one and the other——”

“Certainly. O the liar! the great story-teller! Who is this woman?”

“No, do not ask me, for I do not like to set people by the ears.”

“You shall tell me,—you have to tell me. O the liar!”

“Enough! but you cannot think how sorry I was not to know all the history, so as to be able to confound her.”

“You see how people can invent in this world!” exclaimed again Perpetua, and immediately continued; “as to Beppo, every one knows, and has been able to see—— O Tonio! approach the door and go up stairs, I shall come directly.” Tonio replied “Yes,” from within, and Perpetua continued her impassioned narrative.

Facing Don Abbondio’s door, opened between two low buildings, a little lane which ran in a right line the length of these two houses, and then turned off into a field. Agnese took this road, as though she would draw Perpetua aside, so as to speak more freely, and Perpetua followed her. When they had turned the corner, and were in a place from whence what passed before Don Abbondio’s house could no longer be seen, Agnese coughed loudly; this was the signal, Renzo heard it, and encouraged Lucia, by pressing her arm; both on tip-toe came forth, creeping along the wall silently, silently; they arrived at the door, pushed it open slowly, slowly; softly, and bending themselves, they entered the corridor, where the two brothers were waiting for them. Renzo reclosed very gently the door, and all the four began to mount the stairs, making noise only for two. Arrived on the landing-place, the brothers neared the door of the chamber, which was on the side of the staircase; the Betrothed drew themselves up against the wall.

“*Deo gratias!*” said Tonio, with a loud voice.

"Tonio, enter," replied the voice from within.

"The one who was called, opened the door scarcely enough to allow himself and his brother to pass in one by one. The ray of light which suddenly issued through this aperture, and which painted itself on the dark pavement of the landing-place, made Lucia tremble as though she were discovered. When the two brothers had entered, Tonio drew after him the door, the Betrothed remained immoveable in the darkness, all ear, their breath held back; the loudest noise was the beating of poor Lucia's heart.

Don Abbondio was, as we have said, seated by the miserable light of a little lamp in an old chair, wrapt in an old morning gown, with an old cap on his head, which made a frame round his face. Two thick locks of air which escaped from under his cap, two thick eyebrows, a thick moustache, and a thick beard, all hoary, scattered over this brown and wrinkled face, resembled bushes covered with snow, jutting out over a precipice in the moonlight.

"Ah, ah!" was his salute, as he took off his spectacles, and laid them in his book.

"The Signor Curato will say that I am come too late," said Tonio bowing, as did also Gervaso, but more awkwardly.

"Certainly it is late; late in every manner. Do you know that I am ill?"

"O! I am sorry."

"You will have heard this said; I have fallen sick, and I do not know when I shall be able to be seen — but why have you brought with you this — this boy?"

"For company, Signor Curato."

"Enough, let us see."

"Here are five-and-twenty *berlinghe* quite new, those with Saint Ambrose on horseback," said Tonio, taking a little packet out of his pocket.

"Let us see," replied Don Abbondio; and having taken the packet, he put on again his spectacles, opened it, tried the *berlinghe*, counted them, looked at them again, and found them without defect.

"Now Signor Curato, you will give me the necklace of my Tecla."

"That is but just," replied Don Abbondio. He went towards a press, put a key into the keyhole, and looking behind him as though to keep the spectators in the distance, opened one side of the door, filled up with his body the opening which he made, thrust his head in to look about, and an arm to take the necklace; he drew them back, closed the press, and gave the necklace to Tonio, saying—"Is this it?"

"Now," said Tonio, "please to put a little black upon white."

"Also this?" said Don Abbondio, "they all know it. Ah, how suspicious the world is grown! Do you not trust me?"

"How, Signor Curato! Whether I trust you? You do me wrong; but as my name is in your big book, beside the debt,—since you have taken the trouble to write it once,—since from life to death ——"

"Good, good," interrupted Don Abbondio, and grumbling, he drew towards himself a drawer in the table, took out paper, a pen and an inkhorn, and began to write, repeating aloud the words one after the other, as they issued from his pen. Then Tonio and Gervaso, at a sign which he gave him, planted themselves right before the little table, so as to im-

pede the view of the door; and then, as in idleness, they began scraping the floor with their feet, as a signal to those without to enter, and also to confound at the same time the sound of their steps. Don Abbondio, immersed in his writing, paid attention to nothing else. At the scraping of the four feet, Renzo took one of Lucia's arms, pressing it to give her courage, and moved away, drawing her after him all trembling, since she would have been unable to walk there herself. They entered very gently on tiptoe, holding their breath. Don Abbondio having finished writing, read again attentively what he had written, without raising his eyes from the paper; then folded it in four, saying, "Now shall you be contented?" took his spectacles from his nose with one hand, and with the other presented the writing to Tonio, raising his head at the same time. Tonio, advancing his hand to take it, retired a little on one side, and Gervaso, at a sign which was given him, retired to the other; and then in the midst, as by a *coup-de-théâtre*, appeared Renzo and Lucia! Don Abbondio saw confusedly, saw clearly, became terrified, stupefied, grew enraged, reflected, took a resolution; all in the time that Renzo pronounced the words "Signor Curato, in presence of these witnesses, this is my wife!" His lips were not yet closed, before Don Abbondio let fall the receipt he had taken, raised the lamp with his left hand, seized with his right the cloth which covered the table, and drawing it towards him in a rage, threw to the ground, book, paper, inkhorn and sand; then rushing between the chair and the table, he approached Lucia. The poor child, with her gentle and now trembling voice, had

scarcely pronounced, "And here ——," than Don Abbondio had roughly thrown the cloth over her head, so as to prevent her pronouncing the entire formula. And suddenly letting fall the lamp which he held in the other hand, assisted himself also with this in wrapping her head up in the cloth until she was nearly suffocated, all the time crying out at the pitch of his voice—"Perpetua! Perpetua! help!" The wick of the lamp dying on the pavement, threw a languid and unequal light upon Lucia, who, perfectly disheartened, did not endeavour to disengage herself, and seemed a statue moulded in clay, over which the artist has cast a damp cloth. All light extinguished, Don Abbondio left the poor girl, and went groping about after the door which led into an inner room, found it, entered, shut himself in, still crying, "Perpetua! help! treason! out of this house! out of this house!" All was confusion in the other apartment, Renzo seeking the Curate, and feeling about with his hands, as one does in blindman's buff, had reached the door and knocked, crying out, "Open! open! don't make such a noise." Lucia called to Renzo in a stifled voice, and supplicated him, saying, "For the love of God, let us go, let us go." Tonio on all fours, sought on the pavement after his receipt, and frightened, cried, and jumped about, trying to find the staircase, so as to get out and save himself.

In the midst of all this uproar, we cannot prevent ourselves pausing one moment to make a reflection. Renzo, who caused all this terror in a strange house, where he had secretly introduced himself, where he kept the master himself besieged in his chamber, has all the appearance of an oppressor, Don Abbondio

surprised, put to flight, terrified whilst he was tranquilly attending to his own affairs, appears the victim, and yet in reality, it was he who was the injurer. Thus it often happens in the world. I would say this, it happened in the seventeenth century.

The besieged, seeing that the enemy gave no sign of retiring, opened a window which looked into the church-yard, and began to cry, "help! help!" It was the most beautiful moonlight. The shadow of the church, and further out the long and sharp shadow of the belfry, extended itself, black and distinct, upon the grassy and brilliant church-yard. Every object might be distinguished almost as clearly as by day. But as far as the eye could reach, no sign of a living creature could be perceived. Adjoining, however, the wall of the church, which looked towards the parochial house, was a little habitation, a tiny hut, where slept the sacristan. He, awakened by this lamentable cry, made a spring out of his bed, got up in haste, opened one of the panes in his little window and put forth his head, his eyes still closed with sleep, and said, "What is the matter?"

"Run, Ambrogio! help! There are people in the house!" cried Don Abbondio to him. "I'll come immediately," replied he, and drew back his head, shut the window, and although half asleep, and more than half frightened, discovered on the spot an expedient for assisting the one who called him, without getting himself into the tumult, whatever this might be. He seizes his breeches, which he kept on his bed, tucks them under his arm like a hat of ceremony, and now springs up the wooden staircase, he runs to the belfry, seizes the cord of the largest of the two bells which hang there, and tolls.

Dong, dong, dong, dong! the peasants start up and sit in their beds, the lads lying in the hayloft listen, and spring to their feet. "What is it? What is it? The bell tolls! fire? thieves? bandits?" Many women counsel, beseech their husbands not to move, to let others go; some get up, and run to the window; the cowards, as though persuaded by these prayers, return and lie down; the more curious and the brave descend to seize forks and arquebuses, and to run to the quarter from whence the noise proceeds.

But before they were ready, before even they were well awake, the noise had reached the ears of other people, who watched not far off, dressed and on their legs; the bravoës in one place, Agnese and Perpetua in another. We will say first of all, in a few words, what these have been doing since the moment we left them, some in the hostelry, the others in the demolished house. When the three saw all the doors closed and the street deserted, they went out in haste, as though they perceived it had grown late, saying they would go quickly home, took a walk through the village to assure themselves that every one had retired, and, in fact, did not meet a single living soul, or hear the slightest sound. They passed on very very silently before our poor cottage, the quietest of all, since no one was there. They then went straight to the desolate house, and made their relation to Griso. Immediately he put on his head a large hat, threw over his shoulders a frock of waxed cloth covered with cockle-shells, took a pilgrim's staff in his hand, and said, "Let us go, bravoës; be silent, and attend to my orders." He marched off the first, and the others followed him. They arrived in a short

time at the cottage, by a road opposite to the one by which our little troop set out on its expedition. Griso made his band halt a few paces from the cottage, and went on alone to explore, and seeing all deserted and quiet outside, made two of these wicked ones come on before, and gave them the order to scale the low wall which enclosed the little court, and descended into it to hide themselves in an angle behind a thick fig-tree upon which he had fixed his eyes in the morning. That done, he knocked very gently, with the intention of saying he was an unfortunate pilgrim who petitioned for shelter until day; no one answered; he knocked again even more loudly, not even a "hush!" Then he went and called a third villain, and made him descend like the first two into the court, with the order to remove the bolt gently, so as to have the free power of going in and out. All this was executed with much address and perfect secrecy. He goes and calls the others, makes them enter with him, sends them to conceal themselves with the three, opens the street door very gently, posts two sentinels inside, and then goes straight to the door of the cottage; he knocks again, he waits,—he might well wait! Then he unnails also this lock without any noise. No one said from within, "who's there?" no one was heard; things could not go on better. Having done this, "hist," he calls to those under the tree, and enters with them the rooms on the ground-floor, where in the morning he had so hypocritically begged the morsel of bread. He takes out tinder, a flint, a steel and matches, lights his lantern, and enters an inner room to see if any one is there. There is no one. He returns, and he goes

to the door of the staircase, looks up, listens; every where solitude and silence. He leaves two other sentinels on the ground-floor, takes with him Griguapoco, who was a bravo from the neighbourhood of Bergamo, who alone must menace, soothe, and command, in short, be the orator, to the end that his dialect should make Agnese believe the expedition came from that quarter. With this man at his side, and the others behind, Griso mounted slowly, slowly up the stairs, cursing in his heart every step which creaked, every tread of these scoundrels which made a noise. At length he is at the top. Here is the hare's form! Gently he pushes the door which leads into the first room, it gives way, he opens it slightly, he looks in, all is dark, he lays his ear to the crevice, to hear if any one breathes, no one moves; nothing! Forward then. He places the lantern before his face, so as to see without being seen, and opens the door quite wide. He touches a bed, he throws himself upon it; the bed is made and smooth, with the coverlet well turned down over the pillow. He shrugs his shoulders, turns towards his followers, makes a sign that they shall go into the next chamber, and follows them softly. He goes there, performs the same ceremony, finds the same thing. "What the devil is this?" said he then in his loudest voice, "there must be some dog of a traitor who has played the spy." They all begin to look about with less precaution, and to search in all the corners, they turn the house topsy-turvy. Whilst they are thus occupied, the two who watch at the door hear a noise of quick footsteps, as of some one who hastens from the fields towards the village; the noise approaches; the bravoes

imagine, whoever this may be, he will pass on without stopping; they remain quiet, and stand on their guard. But, in fact, the footsteps stop precisely before the door. It was Menico, who came in haste, sent by Father Cristoforo, to inform the two women that for the love of heaven they should escape out of their house immediately, and come and take refuge in the convent, since —— he knew the wherefore. He takes hold of the hasp of the door to knock, and feels it move in his hand unnailed and loose. “What is this?” thinks he, and pushes the door, somewhat frightened—it opens. Menico steps in with great suspicion. He feels himself suddenly seized by the arms, and two low voices, one on either side of him, say in a very menacing tone—“Silence, or thou art dead!” He, however, sends forth a loud cry; one of those who hold him, places a large hand over his mouth, the other menaces him with an immense knife, so as to frighten him. The little boy trembles like a leaf, and attempts no longer to cry; but all at once, instead of him, the first tolling of the bell, and following it a continuous tempest of sound, is heard. ‘Who is in fault, is in fear,’ says a Milanese proverb; both one and the other of these wicked wretches seem to hear in this tolling, his name, surname, and cognomen. They let go Menico’s arms, draw back theirs in a hurry, raise their hands, open their mouths, gaze at each other, and run to the house where was the greater part of the company. Menico begins running at full speed towards the belfry, where at all events some one must be. Upon the wretches who were groping about from the top to the bottom of the house, this terrible bell made the same impression; they were

confounded; they were terrified; they ran against each other, each one sought the nearest way to arrive at the door. They were all people tried and accustomed to brave difficulties, but they could not stand calm before an uncertain danger, before a danger which had not shewn itself in the distance, but had suddenly burst over them. All Griso's superiority was necessary to keep them together, so that it should be a retreat and not a flight. Like a dog guarding a herd of hogs, running here and running there, after those which are disbanding, seizing one by the ear, and drawing him back, pushing another with his nose, and barking at a third, which this moment leaves the ranks; so the Pilgrim seized by his *ciuffo* one of his companions, who had already touched the threshold, and draws him in; drives back with his staff two others who are ready to escape, shouting to the rest, who are running about here and there, without knowing where to go, until he at length gathers them all together in the middle of the little court—"Quick, quick! pistols in your hands, your knives ready, all together; and then let us set off; thus we shall manage. Who do you think will touch us if we all keep together; great cowards, that you are? But if we let ourselves be taken one by one, these villains will give it us,—shame! Behind me, and be united." After this short harangue he placed himself at their head, and issued forth the first. The house was as we have said, at the beginning of the village. Griso took the road which led towards the fields, and they all followed him in good order.

We will leave them to continue their march, and retrace our steps, and find again Agnese and Perpetua

where we have left them in a certain little road. Agnese had tried to remove the other as much as possible from Don Abbondio's house, and until a certain point all had gone on well. But suddenly the housekeeper recollected that the door was left open, and wished to turn back; Agnese, not to excite suspicion, was obliged to return with her, and followed, trying to hold her back each time she saw her get warm in the relation of these numerous marriages. She appeared to pay great attention, and from time to time to shew she was attentive, or to keep the conversation in a right channel, she said, "Certainly, now I comprehend, that's very good; it's clear; and then? and he? and you?" But at the same time she held another discourse with herself—"Will they be come out now, or will they still be within? How stupid we have all three of us been, not to concert some signal to tell me when all has succeeded! It is a great folly, but it is now done; the best thing now, is to amuse this creature as much as I can. At the worst it will only be a little lost time." Thus with many pausings and hurryings on again, they had returned to within a short distance of Don Abbondio's house, which, however, was not visible to them, on account of this corner; and Perpetua finding herself at a very important part of her recital, had let herself be stopped without making any resistance, and even without being aware of it herself, when all at once was heard echoing from above in the immoveable void of the air, and in the dead silence of night, that first fearful cry of Don Abbondio—

"Help! help!"

"Mercy! what has happened?" cried Perpetua, and wished to run towards the house.

"What is it? what is it?" said Agnese, holding her by her petticoat.

"Mercy! have you not heard?" replied the other, disengaging herself.

"What is it? what is it?" repeated Agnese, seizing her by the arm.

"Fiend of a woman!" cried Perpetua, pushing her away so as to liberate herself; and she set off running. At the same instant was heard, but further off, sharper, more urgent, the cry of Menico.

"Mercy!" cried Agnese also, and she began to gallop behind the other. They had scarcely raised their heels, than the bell tolled, one stroke—two—three, and many following ones. These would all have been spurs to her, had she been in need of such. Perpetua arrived in advance of Agnese a step or two; and whilst waiting to open the door, it opens of itself from within, and Tonio, Gervaso, Renzo, Lucia, appear upon the threshold, who, having found the staircase, had come leaping down, and hearing this terrible uproar, ran in the greatest haste to save themselves.

"What is it? what is it?" demanded Perpetua, panting, from the two brothers, who replied by running against her and escaping. "And you?—how?—what are you doing here?" demanded she from the other couple, when she had recognised them; these also went out without a reply. But Perpetua, running where the need was greater, asked nothing more, entered in haste the corridor, and ran as well as she could in the darkness towards the staircase.

The two who still remained—the Betrothed—found themselves opposite to Agnese, who arrived quite

distressed and alarmed. "Ah! you here?" said she speaking with difficulty. "How has it gone on? what is this bell? I seem to have heard——"

"Home, home!" exclaimed Renzo, "before people arrive;" and they set out; but Menico appeared running,—he recognises them, he stops them, and still trembling, with a weak voice says, "Where are you going? Back, back! on to the convent!"

"Is it thou who ——?" commenced Agnese.

"What is it, then?" demanded Renzo. Lucia, disheartened, was silent, and trembled.

"The devil is in your house!" replied Menico, panting. "I have seen them myself; they wanted to murder me,—Father Cristoforo has said so. And Renzo, he has said that you also should come directly—and then I have seen them myself. It is a providence that I have found you all here. I will tell you all when we have got away."

Renzo, who had more presence of mind than the others, thought that they must go quickly somewhere before the people arrived, and that the safest was to do as Menico counselled, dictated to as he was by the strength of his fear. Then on their way, and out of all danger, they could demand from the little boy a clearer explanation. "Go first," said he to him; "go with him," said he to the women. They turned back and directed their steps towards the church, crossed the church-yard, where, by the grace of heaven, no living soul had yet appeared, entered a little road which ran between the church and Don Abbondio's house, and at the first gap they saw in the hedge, through it and away for the fields.

They were not perhaps distant fifty paces, when

the people began to arrive in the churchyard; the crowd increased every moment. They gazed in each other's faces; every one had a question to ask, no one an answer to give. The first who arrived ran to the church door,—it was shut. They ran to the outside of the belfry, and one of them having placed his head at one of the little windows, a species of loophole, shouted, "What the devil is this?" When Ambrogio heard a familiar voice, he let go the cord; and being assured by the noise that many people had arrived, he replied, "I am coming to open the door." He put on in haste the harness which he had carried under his arm, and came through the interior to the door of the church, and opened it.

"What is all this noise? What is it? where is it? who is it?"

"How? who is it?" said Ambrogio, holding with one hand the door, and with the other a corner of the harness which had thus been put on in such haste. "How, don't you know? There are people in the house of the Signor Curato. Courage, children, help!"

They turn towards the house, they rush there in a crowd, they look up, they listen,—all is quiet; others run to the door,—it is closed, and does not appear to have been moved; they look up again,—there is not a single window open, they do not hear a sound.

"Who is there within? — ohe! — ohe! Signor Curato! Signor Curato!"

Don Abbondio, who, scarcely assured of the flight of the invaders, had retired from the window, closed it, and who now was quarreling with Perpetua in an

under-tone, because she had left him alone in this embarrassment, was obliged, when he heard himself called by the voice of the people, again to come to the window. When he saw this overpowering assistance, he repented of having called it.

“What has happened? What have they done? Who are they? Where are they?” was shouted from fifty voices all at once.

“There is no longer any one here; I thank you; only return home.”

“But who was it? Where are they gone? What has happened?”

“Bad people, people who rove about by night; but they have taken flight, there is nothing more; another time, my children; I return you thanks with all my heart;” and having said this, he retired, and closed the window. Here some began to grumble, others to joke, others to swear, others shrugged their shoulders and turned homewards, when a man arrived so out of breath that he could scarcely bring forth a word. He inhabited the house opposite the cottage of our women; and on hearing the noise, having gone to the window, had seen in the court the disorder and tumult of the braves when Griso endeavoured to rally them. When he had recovered breath, he cried, “What are you about children? The devil is not here, he is down at the bottom of the village in Agnese Mondella’s house; armed men are inside, it seems that they wish to murder a pilgrim,—who knows what devil it is?”

“What?—What?—What?” And a tumultuous consultation commenced. “We must go—we must see. How many are they?—How many are we?—Who are they?—The consul!—The consul!”

“I am here,” replied the consul from the midst of the crowd. “I am here; but it is necessary to assist me, to obey me. Quick; where is the sacristan? To the bell, to the bell! Quick; one to run to Lecco to fetch help; come here all ——”

How they run, how they glide between man and man, how they steal away: the tumult was at its height, when another villager arrived who had just seen the bravoës depart in haste, and cried, “Run, children; thieves, or bandits, who escape with a pilgrim; they are already out of the village; after them! after them!” At this news, without waiting the orders of the captain, they moved off in a mass, and precipitated themselves into the street; gradually as the troop advanced, some one of the vanguard would slacken his pace, would let himself be overtaken, and place himself in the body of the battalion; those behind pushed on; and thus the confused swarm at length arrived at the indicated spot. The traces of invasion were fresh and manifold, the door open, the lock loosened, but the assailants were gone. They enter the court, they go to the house-door; it is also broken in. They call, “Agnese! Lucia! the pilgrim! where is the pilgrim? Stefano must have dreamed about the pilgrim; no, no, Carlandrea has seen him also. Ohe! Pilgrim! Agnese! Lucia!” No one answers. They must have carried them off.—There were then some among the crowd, who, raising their voices, proposed pursuing the robbers; this was an infamous thing, and it would be a disgrace to the whole country if any thief might come with impunity and carry off women, as a kite does chickens from a deserted barn. A new deliberation, still more tumultuous; but some

one (and it has never been well known who this was) gives out in the assembly, that Agnese and Lucia have taken refuge in a house in the village. The report rapidly circulates, obtains credit; they speak no longer of giving chase to the brigands; the troop disbands itself, and each one returns home. There was a murmur, a hum, a continual noise of knocking and an opening of doors, an appearing and disappearing of lights, a questioning of women from the windows, and an answering from the street below. The public way became silent and deserted, the discourses were continued within doors, and died away in yawns, to be continued next morning. In the mean time, nothing new happened, except that this same morning, the consul being in his field, his chin supported upon his hand, his elbow upon the handle of his spade which was half dug into the earth, and with his foot on the iron part,—being there, as I said, reflecting alone upon the mysteries of the past night, and upon the compound question of that which he ought to do, and that which it would be expedient, he saw two men of a sufficiently bold bearing approach, with hair like two French kings of the first race, and resembling for the rest those two who five days before had accosted Don Abbondio, if they were not perhaps the very same. These, with an air even less ceremonious, intimated to the consul that he should take good care not to report to the Podestà what had happened, nor speak the truth in case he should be questioned, nor gossip, nor foment the gossip of others; forasmuch as he held dear the hope of dying in his bed.

Our fugitives travelled on a considerable way in

silence, turning round now one, now another, to see if any one followed them; they were wretched and dispirited from the fatigue of the flight, the torment and suspense in which they had been, the grief of their ill-suecess, and the confused apprehension of this new and obscure danger. And yet more did the continued pursuit of this ever-tolling bell distress them, which the farther they removed came upon their ear more hoarse and dull, and seemed to assume an indescribable something of sinister and mournful. The fugitives found themselves here in a desolate abandoned field, and Agnes having taken breath, broke silence, asking Renzo how things had gone on, and Menico, what devil this was in her house. Renzo related briefly his sad history; and then the three turned towards the child, who repeated more exactly the information given him by the Father, and related what he himself had seen, and the dangers which he had run, all of which only too well confirmed this information. His auditors comprehended more than Menico had been able to tell; at this discovery they were again seized with horror, and stopped suddenly all three, looking each other in the face terrified, then with a unanimous movement, they placed each a hand upon the poor boy's head or shoulder to caress him, to demand pardon, to render him silent thanks for having thus been their guardian angel, and at the same time to shew the sympathy they felt for the agony he had suffered, and the danger he had run, in order to insure their safety. "Now return home, so that thy parents may no longer be in trouble about thee," said Agnese to him, and remembering the two *parpagliole* she had promised him, took four out of

her pocket, and gave them to him, adding—"Enough—pray the Lord that we may soon meet again, and then ——" here Renzo gave him a new *berlingha*, and recommended him strongly to say nothing of the commission the Friar had intrusted him with; Lucia again caressed him, and bade him adieu, with a sorrowful voice: the boy, who was also affected, saluted the three and turned back. Our travellers recommenced their march, all of them sad and thoughtful, the women in front, and Renzo following them as a guard. Lucia remained close to the arm of her mother, and refused sweetly, yet with firmness, the assistance which the youth offered her in the difficulties of this journey performed out of the beaten road; ashamed in her heart, even in so terrible and perplexing a moment, to have remained so long and so familiarly with him, although she expected in a few moments to become his wife. And now this dream having vanished thus sorrowfully, she repented of having gone so far; and amidst so many subjects of alarm, alarmed herself by this modesty which is not born from the sad knowledge of evil,—by this modesty, ignorant of its own existence, like to the terror of a child, who trembles in the dark, without knowing wherefore.

"And the house?" demanded Agnese suddenly. But, however important this question was, no one replied to it, because no one could give a satisfactory answer. They continued their way in silence, and soon after arrived at the esplanade before the church of the convent. Renzo approached the door of the church, and pushed it with force. It opened, and the moonlight entering through the aperture illumined

the pale face and silver head of Father Cristoforo, who stood there awaiting them. Seeing that no person was wanting, "God be praised!" said he, and made them a sign to enter. Beside him stood another Capuchin; this was the lay sacristan, who by prayers and reasonings he had persuaded to stay up, leave the door half open, and watch with him, to receive these poor persecuted ones; and it did not require less than the Father's authority, and his reputation as a saint, to obtain from the lay-brother a condescension thus fatiguing, dangerous, and irregular. When they had entered, Father Cristoforo closed the door very gently. Here the sacristan could bear no more, and drawing the Father aside, said in his ear, "but, Father, Father — the night — in the church — with women — locked up — the rule, — but Father ——" and he shook his head, pronouncing with great difficulty these words. Only see! thought Father Cristoforo, if this were a pursued robber, Fra Fazio would not make the slightest difficulty in the world; and a poor innocent who escapes from the clutches of the wolf!—" *Omnia mundo mundis*," he then said, turning all at once round towards Fra Fazio, forgetting that he did not understand Latin. But it was precisely such a forgetfulness which produced the desired effect. If the Father had begun to dispute with arguments, it would not have failed Fra Fazio in others to oppose him, and heaven only knows how and when the affair would have been ended. But hearing these words full of a mysterious sense, pronounced with so much resolution, it seemed to him that they must contain the solution of all his doubts. He tranquillized himself, and said "enough, you know more than I do."

“Confide in me,” replied Father Cristoforo; and by the uncertain light of the lamp which burnt before the altar, he approached the fugitives, who stood waiting in doubt, and said to them, “My children, thank God, who has delivered you from a great danger;” and here he began to explain fully to them what he had before only hinted to the little messenger, since he did not suspect that they knew more of this than he, but supposed Menico had found them quietly at home before the robbers had arrived. No one undeceived him, not even Lucia, who, however, felt a secret remorse for such an act of dissimulation towards such a man; but this was the night of embarrassment and subterfuge.

“After this,” continued he, “you see well, my children, that now this country is no longer safe for you. It is your country; you were born here, you have done evil to no one; but God wills this. It is a trial, my children; support it with patience, with confidence, without hatred, and rest assured that the time will come in which you will find yourselves satisfied with all that now happens. I have thought where to find you a place of refuge for the present. Soon I hope you will be able to return in security to your home; but in every case God will direct all for the best; and I certainly will endeavour not to be unworthy of the favour which he shews me in thus selecting me as his minister in the service of you, his poor dearly beloved afflicted ones. You,” continued he, turning towards the two women, “you will be able to stop at ——, there you will be removed from every danger, and yet at the same time not too far removed from your home. Go to the convent there,

ask to see the Superior, he will be another Fra Cristoforo for you. And thou also, thou oughtest now to save thyself from thy own rage and from the rage of others. Carry this letter to the Father Buonaventura da Lodi, in our convent of the Porte Orientale at Milan. He will be a father to thee, he will guide thee and provide thee with work until thou canst return again to live tranquilly here. Go to the shore of the lake near the mouth of the Bione (a torrent a few paces distant from Pescarenico), you will see there a boat moored, you must say, 'the boat,' they will say, 'for whom?' you must answer, 'San Francesco.' The boat will receive and transport you to the other shore, where you will find a cart which will conduct you straight to ——"

Whoever should demand how Fra Cristoforo had thus immediately at his disposal these means of transport by land and water, will shew that he is not aware what was then the power of a Capuchin who enjoyed the reputation of a saint.

It now only remained to think about the preservation of the house; the Father received the keys, engaging himself to consign them to those persons whom Renzo and Agnese indicated to him. Agnese raised hers out of her pocket with a sigh, thinking that in this moment the house was open, that the devil had been there, and who knew whether there remained anything to guard!

"Before departing," said the Father, "let us pray all together to the Lord, that He will give you strength, give you love to desire that which He has willed." Saying this he knelt down in the middle of the church, and all did the same. After they had

prayed some moments in silence, he in a low but distinct voice, pronounced these words, "we pray to Thee, for this unhappy one who has reduced us to this extremity; we should be unworthy of Thy mercy, did we not demand this from the bottom of our hearts, of this indeed he has much need! We in the midst of our tribulation have this comfort, that we are in the path where Thou hast placed us; we can offer Thee our woes, and they become a gain. But he—he is Thy enemy! O the unfortunate one! He struggles against Thee. Have pity for him, O Lord! touch his heart, render him Thy friend, grant him all the blessings which we could desire ourselves!" Raising himself then in haste, he said, "Come children, there is no time to lose; God will watch over you, his angels will accompany you; go," and whilst he moved away with that emotion which does not find words, but which manifests itself without, the Father added in a sorrowful voice, "My heart tells me that we shall soon see each other again."

Certainly, the heart has always something to say upon that which is to be. But what does the heart know? Scarcely a little of that which has already happened.

Without waiting for a reply, Fra Cristoforo moved towards the vestry, the travellers issued forth from the church, and Fra Frazio closed the door, bidding them adieu with a voice which also betrayed some emotion. They set forth silently towards the shore which had been indicated to them; they see there the boat, and having given and received the pass-word, stept into it. The boatman pushing with one of his oars at the prow, detaches the boat from the shore;

then seizes the other, and rows with both arms, taking the width of the lake towards the opposite bank. Not a breath of wind stirred, the lake lay smooth and calm, and would have appeared immoveable but for the trembling and floating of the moon, which reflected itself from mid-heaven. You only heard the wave break itself gently upon the gravel of the shore, the more distant murmur of the water round the arches of the bridge, and the measured fall of those two oars, which cut the azure surface of the lake, issuing at once, all dripping, then suddenly diving under again. The wave cut by the boat re-uniting itself behind the poop, formed a curling line, which continued ever removing itself from the shore. The passengers silent, their heads turned back, contemplated the mountains and the country illuminated by the moon, and varied here and there by deep shadows. The villages, the houses, the cottages, were to be distinguished; and the great palace of Don Rodrigo, which, with its flat roof elevated above the miserable huts heaped up on the edge of this promontory, seemed a ferocious man who, surrounded by gloom, erect in the midst of a company of sleepers, watches meditating a crime. Lucia saw it and trembled; she followed with her eye the declivity of the mountain as far as her village, gazed earnestly in the distance, perceived her cottage, perceived the thick foliage of the fig-tree which projected beyond the wall of their little court, perceived the window of her chamber; and seated as she was in the bottom of the boat, placed her arms upon the side, placed upon her arm her forehead as though to sleep, and wept secretly.

Adieu mountains, source of waters, and elevated to

the heavens; unequal summits, known so well to him who is grown up among you, and impressed in his mind not less than is the aspect of his most familiar friends; torrents, whose rush he distinguishes like the sound of the domestic voices; houses, scattered and white upon the slopes, like herds of sheep at pasture; adieu! How sad is the departing step of him grown up among you! Even he who quits you voluntarily, driven by caprice and the hope of making elsewhere his fortune, feels at this moment his dreams of riches vanish, he is astonished how he could even have resolved upon this departure, and would turn back, did he not think one day he should return enriched. The farther he advances into the plain, the more his eyes shrink away disgusted and wearied; the air appears to him sad and dead; he advances melancholy and listless into tumultuous cities; houses adjoining houses, streets opening into streets, seem to take away his breath; and standing before edifices admired by strangers, he thinks with an uneasy desire of the belfry of his village, and of the little house upon which he has had his eyes already a long time, and which he will buy when he shall return rich to his mountains.

But what a moment for the one who has never carried her thoughts, even the most fugitive, beyond these mountains; who has formed among them all her dreams of the future, and is cast away by a perverse power! Who, torn suddenly from her dearest occupations, and disturbed in her dearest hopes, abandons these mountains, to wander in the footsteps of strangers whom she has never desired to know, and who even in imagination cannot arrive at a fixed

moment for return. Adieu! home of her birth, where governed by a secret thought she learned to distinguish from the sounds of common footsteps, the sound of a step expected with a mysterious fear. Adieu! house still strange to her, house so often secretly looked at in passing, and yet never without a blush; in which the mind pictured to itself, the tranquil and enduring life of a wife. Adieu! the church where the soul has so many a time become serene, singing the praises of God; where was promised and prepared a holy rite, where the secret desire of the heart should be so solemnly blessed, and love be commanded and pronounced holy; adieu! He who gives you so much joy is everywhere, and He never disturbs the joy of His children, but to prepare and assure a greater joy for them.

Of this kind, if not precisely such, were the thoughts of Lucia; and but little different were those of the two pilgrims, whilst the boat approached the right bank of the Adda.

CHAPTER IX.

THE shock of the boat against the shore aroused Lucia. After having dried her eyes in secret, she raised her head as though she had been sleeping. Renzo got out first, and gave his hand to Agnese, who followed next, and who in her turn gave her hand to her daughter, and then the three returned thanks to the boatman. "For what?" said he, "we are here on earth to assist each other," and he drew back his hand almost with fear, as though they had been proposing to him to steal, when Renzo endeavoured to slip into it a portion of the *quattrinelli* which he had about him, and which he had this evening taken with the intention of regaling generously Don Abbondio, when he against his own will should have served him. The cart was ready; the driver greeted the three expected travellers, made them mount, said a word to his horse, gave a crack with his whip, and away.

Our author does not describe this nocturnal journey, he is even silent regarding the name of the country whither Fra Cristoforo had directed them, nay, even protests expressly that he does not wish to tell it. In the progress of the history, the reason of this reticence reveals itself; the adventures of Lucia, during this sojourn, becoming entangled in the blank intrigues of a person belonging to a family, as it

appears, very powerful at the time our author writes. To assign some reason for the strange conduct of this person in this particular instance, he has been obliged briefly to relate her preceding life, and the family there plays such a singular part that you will easily recognise what family it is, do you only take the trouble to read. But that which the circumspection of the poor man has desired to conceal from us, our diligence has found elsewhere. A Milanese historian, who has had to mention this personage, names, it is true, neither her nor her country, but says there was a town, old and noble, which to be a city only required the name; says, moreover, that the Lambo flows past it; and moreover, also, that there is an archbishop. Comparing these evidences, we deduce that this can be no other than Monza. In the vast treasure of erudite induction, there may be more subtle, but that there is a more certain induction, we will not believe. We could, even upon a well-founded conjecture, name the family, but although it is already sometime extinct, we will leave the name in the pen, in order not to risk injuring the dead, and also to leave the learned this subject of research.

Our travellers arrived then, at Monza, a little after sunrise. The driver entered an hostelry, and there, as familiar with the place and acquainted with the host, he had a room assigned to the travellers, and accompanied them there. Between his thanks, Renzo endeavoured to make him also receive some money, but he, like the boatman, had another recompensè in view, more distant, but more abundant.

After an evening, such as we have described, after a night, such as every one can imagine, passed in the

society of such thoughts, with the constant fear of some disagreeable rencontre, exposed to the breath of a breeze more than autumnal, and to the repeated jolting of the inconvenient cart, which rudely roused them up before they had scarcely closed their eyes, it hardly appeared to the three a reality to sit upon a bench which stood firm, and in a chamber, let this be never so homely. They made a repast, such as was permitted by the misery of the times, by their means; small in proportion to the accidental wants of an uncertain future, and by their little appetite. The three thought of the banquet which two days before they had expected to enjoy, and each one heaved a deep sigh. Renzo would have wished to remain there, at least all that day, to see the women lodged, and to render them the first services they might require, but the Father had recommended to Agnese and Lucia to speed him forth immediately on his journey. They assigned these orders, and a hundred other reasons; such as people would make remarks, that the separation longer delayed would be still more sorrowful, and that he could soon return and give and receive information. They concerted, as well as they were able, the manner of seeing each other again, more quickly than was possible. Lucia did not hide her tears, and Renzo had difficulty to restrain his, and squeezing Agnese's hand very tightly, said in a stifled voice, "Till I see you again," and set forth.

The women would have found themselves much embarrassed had it not been for the good driver, who was ordered to conduct them to the convent of the Capuchins, and to afford them every other assistance

which they might require. With him, then, they set out to the convent, which, as every one knows, was a few paces distant from Monza. Arrived at the door, the driver pulled the bell, and asked to see the Superior, who came immediately, and received the letter on the threshold. "O, from Fra Cristoforo!" said he, recognising the handwriting. The tone of his voice and the expression of his countenance plainly shewed he pronounced the name of a very dear friend. It is necessary here to mention that our good Cristoforo had in this letter recommended the two women most warmly, and related their case with much feeling; therefore the Superior, from time to time, gave signs of surprise and indignation, and at length raising his eyes from the page, fixed upon the women a certain look of pity and interest. When he had finished reading, he remained some time in thought, then said, "There is only the Signora—if the Signora would take upon herself this affair."

He then drew Agnese aside upon the space before the convent, and made several inquiries, upon all of which she satisfied him, and then turning towards Lucia, he said, "My good women, I will endeavour to do something; I hope to be able to provide you an asylum more than secure, more than honourable, until the time when God shall provide for you in a better manner. Will you come with me?" The women respectfully replied "Yes," and the Friar continued, "Good, I will conduct you immediately to the convent of the Signora; but, however, keep a few paces distant from me, since the world delights in saying ill-natured things, and God knows how much fine gossip it would make if the Father Superior

were seen in the street with a beautiful girl—with women I would say.”

Saying this he went on in advance; Lucia blushed, the driver smiled and looked at Agnese, who let a half-smile escape her, and all the three followed behind about ten paces removed from the good Superior. The women then demanded from the driver that which they had not dared to demand from the Father—who was the Signora?

“The Signora,” he replied, “is a nun; but she is not a nun like the others; not that she is the abbess, nor the prioress, since, as people say, she is one of the youngest nuns; but she is of the rib of Adam. Her family in former times were very great people, who came from Spain, from whence those who command in these parts come; and on this account they call her the Signora, to shew that she is a great lady; and the country calls her by this name, since it is said that in this convent there never before has been a person like her; and her relations at Milan are people of great account, and are of those who are always in the right, and even of still greater account at Monza, since her father, although he does not live here, is the first person in the country, and on this account she can do as she pleases in the convent; and even out of it the people bear her a great respect. If she takes an affair in hand, she succeeds always in making it victorious; thus, if this good monk can obtain her permission to place you in her hands, and she accept you, I can assure you that you are as safe as though before the altar.”

Arrived at the gate of the town, flanked by a small old tower, half in ruins, and by a piece of an old

castle, also ruined, which perhaps some of our readers may remember to have seen still standing, the Superior stopped and turned round to see whether the others were coming, then entered, and directed his steps towards the convent; when he had arrived there, he paused again upon the threshold, waiting for the little company. The Father begged the driver to return in a few hours for the answer to Fra Cristoforo; he promised this, and took leave of the women, who loaded him with thanks and commissions for their good friend at Pescarenico. The Superior made the mother and daughter enter the first court of the convent; he introduced them into the stewardess's room, and then went alone to ask the favour. After some time he reappeared quite joyful, and said that they must come with him; and indeed it was already time that he returned, for the mother and daughter knew no longer how to disengage themselves from the pressing inquiries of the stewardess. Crossing a second court, he gave the women some instructions regarding the manner in which they should behave towards the Signora. "She is well disposed towards you, and she can do a great deal for you. Be humble and respectful; reply with sincerity to the questions it will please her to ask you; and when not questioned, leave all to me." They entered a room on the ground floor, which led to the parlour; before setting foot there, the Superior, pushing the door open, said in an under voice to the women, "She is here," as though to remind them of all his instructions.

Lucia had never before seen a convent; when she was in the parlour she looked around her, seeking everywhere the Signora, to whom to make her rever-

ence, and not perceiving any one, stood like a person enchanted; but seeing the Father and Agnese going towards a certain corner, she looked in this direction, and saw a window of a singular form, with two great thick iron grates, and behind them a nun standing. Her appearance, which denoted perhaps the age of five-and-twenty, made at first sight an impression of beauty, but of beauty cruelly treated, withered, and one might almost say destroyed. A black veil thrown over the head, and drawn horizontally across her brow, fell on each side at an equal distance from the face; under this veil a bandeau of linen, of a dazzling whiteness, girded a forehead of a different whiteness, but not of an inferior brilliancy; another bandeau in folds surrounded the face, even underneath the chin, then was wrapt round the neck, and extended over the bosom so as to cover the slope of the black robe. But this forehead became often wrinkled, as by a painful contraction; and then the two black eyebrows approached each other with a rapid movement; two eyes, also very black, fixed themselves upon you with a proud investigation, then suddenly lowered themselves as though seeking concealment: in certain moments an attentive observer would have believed they demanded affection, sympathy, pity; in others he would have thought to gather in them the instantaneous revelation of an indescribable something of menace and ferocity; when they remained immovable and listless, he would have imagined there a proud satiety which might be the work of some secret thought, of some pre-occupation of the mind, stronger than the interest excited in her by surrounding objects. The very pale cheeks descended into a delicate and

t

graceful contour, but were changed and rendered somewhat sharp by a slow extenuation. Her lips, although scarcely tinted with a pale rose, stood forth startlingly in the midst of this paleness; their motion was like that of the eyes, sudden, quick, full of expression and of mystery. The well-proportioned height of her person became less observable through a certain negligence of deportment, and was disfigured by certain unlooked-for movements, unusual and too decided for a woman, not to say for a nun. Even in her dress there was here and there something studied or negligent, which announced a nun of a singular character; her figure was attired with a certain temporal care, and from under the bandeau issued forth a little lock of black hair, a circumstance which proved either forgetfulness or disregard of the rule which prescribes the always keeping shaven the hair cut in the solemn ceremony of taking the veil.

These things made no impression upon the women little accustomed to distinguish one nun from another; and the Superior, who did not see the Signora for the first time, was, like many others, used to the singularity which shewed itself in her person as well as in her manners.

The Signora was, as we have said, in this moment standing behind the grate, with one hand negligently placed upon it, her very white fingers twisted among the bars. She gazed with great attention at Lucia, who came hesitatingly forward. "Reverend mother, illustrious Signora," said the Superior, his head bowed, his hand on his breast; "this is the poor girl for whom you have made me hope your powerful protection; and this is her mother."

The two women thus presented, made very low curtseys; the Signora signed to them with her hand that this was sufficient, and said, turning to the Father, "It is a great pleasure for me to be able to do anything agreeable to our good friends, the Capuchin Fathers. But," continued she, "tell me a little more particularly the case of this girl, so that I may see better what can be done for her."

Lucia became crimson, and bowed her head.

"You must know, reverend mother," began Agnese, but the Superior, by a glance, cut short the words in her mouth, and replied, "this girl, illustrious Signora, comes to me recommended, as I have said, by one of my brethren. She has been obliged secretly to quit her country to escape great dangers; and has need of an asylum for some time, where she can live in security, and where no one will venture to disturb her, where ——"

"What dangers?" interrupted the Signora; "if you please Father Superior, do not tell me the thing thus in enigmas. You know that we nuns love to hear histories most minutely told."

"They are perils which can scarcely be lightly hinted at to the chaste ears of the reverend mother."

"O certainly!" said in haste the Signora, blushing somewhat. Was this modesty? He who should have observed the rapid expression of disdain which accompanied this blush would have doubted this, and he would have doubted still more had he compared it with the colour which spread itself over Lucia's cheeks.

"It is sufficient to say," replied the Superior, "that a gentleman, an oppressor (not all the great of this

world make use of the gifts of God for His glory, and for the advantage of the poor, as does the very illustrious Signora), a gentleman, after having a long time pursued this young creature with unworthy flatteries, and seeing that they were useless, has had the heart to pursue her openly with violence, and the unfortunate has been obliged to fly her home."

"Approach, young girl," said the Signora to Lucia, making a sign with her finger. "I know that the Father Superior is the mouth of truth, but no one can be better informed than you in this affair. It is for you to say whether this cavalier was an odious persecutor." As to the order to approach, Lucia obeyed this instantly, but to answer was another affair. An inquiry upon this subject, even had it been made by one of her equals, would have embarrassed her not a little; made by this Signora, with a certain air of malicious doubt, it was impossible for her to answer. "Signora,—reverend mother—" she stammered, and gave no sign of having anything else to say. Here Agnese believed herself, as being next to Lucia assuredly the best informed, authorised to come to her assistance. "Illustrious Signora," said she, "I can testify that my daughter hated this cavalier, as much as the devil hates holy water; I would say that he was the devil himself, but the Signora will pardon me if I express myself ill, since we are people without ceremony. The fact is, that the poor child was promised to a youth, our equal, who lives in the fear of God, and who is well off in the world; and if the Signor Curato had been a little more like one I know—I am aware that I speak of a clergyman,—but Father Cristoforo, the friend of the Father Superior here, is

a man of God, and is full of charity; and if he were here he could attest ——”

“You are very ready to speak without being questioned,” interrupted the Signora, with a haughty and angry air, which almost made her appear hideous. “Be silent, I only know too well myself that parents have always an answer to give in the name of their children!”

Agnese mortified, cast a glance which meant to say, “Thou seest what has happened to me through thy timidity.” The Superior also signed to the young girl, glancing and nodding, that this was the moment to exert herself, and not leave her poor mother in embarrassment.”

“Reverend Signora,” said Lucia, “what my mother has said is the pure truth. The youth who asked me for his wife,” and here she became crimson, “I would accept of my own will. Pardon me, I speak boldly; but I do this lest you should think ill of my mother. And as to this Signor, God pardon him! I would sooner die than fall into his hands. And if the Signora does us the charity to place us in security, since we are reduced to the extremity of demanding an asylum, and of incommoding the rich,—but if the will of God be done, be assured Signora, that no one will pray for you more from their hearts, than we poor women.”

“I believe you,” said the Signora, with a softened voice; “but I wished to have the pleasure of hearing one by one. Not that I have need of other explanations and other motives to make me serve the wishes of the Father Superior,” added she, suddenly turning round to him with a studied complaisance. “Nay,” continued she, “I have already thought of it; and

this is what appears to me the best to be done in the present moment. The stewardess of the convent has married a few days since the last of her daughters. These women can occupy the room left at liberty by this girl, and can render the small services which she used to do here. Truly,——” here she signed to the Superior, who came nearer the grate, and then continued, “truly, considering the dearth there is this year, we did not think of substituting any one in her place, but I will speak to the Lady Abbess, and a little word from me, and as a wish of the Father Superior,—in short, I consider the thing as arranged.” The Superior began to return thanks, but the Signora interrupted him, “ceremonies are not necessary. Also I, in any circumstance, in any need, should avail myself of the assistance of the Capuchin fathers. After all,” continued she with a smile, through which transpired an indescribable something of irony and bitterness,—“after all, are we not brothers and sisters?”

Having said this, she called a lay sister (two such by a singular distinction were assigned to her particular service), and ordered her immediately to inform the Lady Abbess of what had taken place, and then make the necessary arrangements with the stewardess and Agnese. She then sent away Agnese, took leave of the Superior, and kept Lucia with herself. The Superior accompanied Agnese to the door, giving her new instructions, and then went to write the letter of information for his friend Cristoforo. A very giddy person, this Signora, thought he to himself on his way home,—really a very curious person. But he who knows how to manage her weaknesses, can make her do what he likes. My Cristoforo will certainly not

expect that I have served him thus quickly and well. The good man! There is no remedy for it. He must needs always take upon himself some troublesome affair or other, but he does it always for good. Fortunate for him this time that he has found a friend who, without much noise, without much preparation, without much difficulty, has conducted the affair to a good port. He will be satisfied, this good Cristoforo, and will see also that we here are good for something.

The Signora, who in the presence of a poor Capuchin had studied her attitudes and words, at length, left alone with an inexperienced country girl, thought no longer of restraining herself; and her discourse became by degrees so strange, that, instead of relating it, we consider it more in place briefly to recount the history of this unfortunate, or at least so much as is necessary to explain the something of mysterious and extraordinary which we have seen in her, and in order that the motives of her conduct in those facts which we have yet to relate, may be somewhat understood.

She was the youngest daughter of the Prince —, a powerful Milanese gentleman, who might be counted among the most opulent of the city. But the high opinion which he entertained of his title made his revenues appear to him scarcely sufficient, nay, even inadequate, to sustain it with honour, and his one thought was how, as much as depended upon himself, to preserve this revenue, as it then was, in the possession of one person. How many children he had, history does not expressly say; we are only given to understand that he had destined to the cloister all

the younger branches of either sex, so as to leave the revenue untouched to his eldest son, destined to preserve the family, that is to give being to children, in order to torment himself and to torment them after the same manner. Our unfortunate had not yet seen the light, when her condition was irrevocably fixed. It only remained to be decided whether it should be a monk or a nun; for the decision of which, not her consent, but her presence was needed. When she came into the world, the Prince, her father, wishing to give her a name which should immediately reveal the idea of the cloister, and one which had been borne by a saint of high birth, called her Gertrude. Dolls dressed as nuns were the first toys put into her hands; then little saints which represented nuns; and these presents were always accompanied with the injunction to take great care of them as very precious things, and with the affirmative interrogation, "It's beautiful, is it not?" When the Prince or the Princess, or the little Prince, the only male child brought up in the house, wished to praise the good look of the little girl, it appeared as though they could only well express their idea by the words, "the pretty Lady Abbess!" No one, however, ever directly said to her, "thou must become a nun." This was an understood thing, and was touched upon incidentally in every conversation which regarded her future destiny. If now and then the little Gertrude was guilty of arrogant or imperious behaviour, which her disposition easily led her to be, "thou art a little girl now," they would say to her, "these manners are not becoming to thee,—when thou art the Abbess, thou canst command and do just as thou pleasest."

At other times, the Prince, reprimanding her for certain other manners too free and too familiar, into which she was equally liable to fall, "Ah, ah!" he would say, "this is not behaviour for one of thy rank. If thou desirest one day that people should shew thee that respect which is due to thy rank, learn early to govern thyself, remember that in every thing thou must be the first in the convent, since thy noble blood remains everywhere the same."

All words of this kind impressed in the brain of the little girl the idea that she should become a nun; but those which came from the mouth of her father produced more effect than all the others together. The bearing of the Prince was habitually that of a severe master; but when he spoke of the future condition of his children, in his countenance and in his words shewed itself such an immovability of purpose, such a dark jealousy of command, that it impressed you with the feeling of a fatal necessity.

At six years old, Gertrude was 'placed, for her education, or rather for her training to the imposed vocation, in the convent where we have seen her. The choice of this place was not made without design. The good conductor of the two women had said that the father of the Signora was the greatest personage at Monza, and comparing this testimony, such as it is, with other indications which the Anonymous lets heedlessly escape him here and there, we can even assert that he was the feudatory lord of the country. However this may be, he at least enjoyed at Monza a great authority; and thought that here, better than anywhere else, his daughter would be treated with those distinctions and attentions which would induce

her to select the convent for her perpetual abode. He did not deceive himself; the Abbess and some other intriguing nuns, who as the saying is, "have the ladle in their hands," exulting in seeing thus offered to them the pledge of a protection so extremely useful in every occasion, and always so glorious, accepted the proposition with expressions of gratitude, not exaggerated, although they were strong, and responded fully to the intentions which the Prince had let transpire regarding the permanent establishment of his daughter—intentions which so perfectly coincided with their own. Gertrude, scarcely entered into the convent, was called by Antonomasia, *the Signorina*, had a place reserved for her at table and in the dormitory, had her conduct cited to the others as an example, was fondled and caressed with many endearments, seasoned with a half-respectful familiarity, which pleases children so much when they observe it in those who are accustomed to treat other children with an habitual air of superiority. It was not, however, that all the nuns were plotting to draw the poor child into this snare: there were many of them simple-hearted creatures, far removed from every species of intrigue, to whom the thought of sacrificing a girl to interested motives would have excited horror,—but they were all attentive to their own particular occupations; some did not perceive these plots; others did not distinguish how much in them was bad; some abstained from making any examination; others remained silent, in order not to excite useless scandal. Even a few who remembered having been conducted by similar arts to profess that which they afterwards repented of, felt compassion

for the poor little innocent, and consoled themselves by lavishing upon her tender and melancholy caresses; she, however, was far from suspecting that there was a mystery in all this. / And thus the affair progressed, and would perhaps have progressed successfully to the very end, had Gertrude been the only young girl in the convent. But among her companions in education here were some who knew that they were destined for marriage. The little Gertrude, nourished in her idea of superiority, spoke magnificently of her future destiny as Abbess—as Princess of the convent, and wished to be an object of envy to all. She saw with astonishment and with displeasure that many of these did not shew themselves in the least moved by this proud destiny. To the majestic, but somewhat cold and circumscribed images which the pre-eminence in a convent can furnish, they opposed the brilliant and varied pleasure of weddings, of festivals, of balls, of rural parties of pleasure, of rich dresses, and equipages. These images produced in Gertrude's mind that movement, that stir, which a great basket, full of freshly gathered flowers, would produce when placed before a beehive. Her parents and her instructresses had cultivated and drawn forth her natural vanity, in order to make her love the cloister; but when this passion was excited by ideas much more in accordance with her nature, she threw herself upon them with an ardour much more lively, much more spontaneous. Not to remain beneath her companions, and to deliver herself to this new humour, she replied, that, after all, no one could place the veil upon her head without her consent; that she also could marry, live in a palace, and enjoy the world, better

even than any of them; that she could do this, if she had wished it; that she should and did wish it, and, in fact, really did. The idea of the necessity of her consent,—an idea which until that moment had remained, as it were, unperceived, and shrunk back in a corner of her brain,—unfolded itself there, and shewed itself in all its importance. She called it forth every moment to her succour, to enjoy more tranquilly the images of a joyous future. Behind this idea, however, always infallibly arrived another; this consent had to be refused,—the Prince, her father, who considered, or appeared to consider, it as already given,—and at this idea the mind of the young girl was far from enjoying the security which her words boasted. She compared herself then with those companions who were very differently sure of their future, and experienced bitterly herself the envy which in the beginning she had thought of making them experience. Envy, she hated them; sometimes her hatred evaporated in spites, in rudeness, in cutting words; sometimes the conformity of desires and hopes calmed her, and gave birth to an apparent but fugitive intimacy. At other times, wishing to enjoy meanwhile something real and of the present, she was pleased with the preference shewn her, and made every one feel her superiority; at other times, being no longer able to support the solitude of her fears and desires, she would go all full of kindness to these comrades, as to implore benevolence, counsel, courage. In the midst of these deplorable little combats with herself and with others she had passed her childhood, and found herself in that age so critical, when it seems as though a mysterious power enters into the

soul, which excites, adorns, invigorates all inclinations, all ideas, and sometimes transforms and turns them into an unforeseen channel. That which Gertrude until then most distinctly desired in her visions of the future was pomp and outward splendour; but an indescribable something, soft and affectionate, which at first had been lightly diffused there, and as it were shrouded in mist, now began to develop itself, and to exceed every thing else in her imagination. She had made for herself, in the most secret recess of her mind, as it were, a splendid retreat; here she took refuge from the present, here she received certain strange personages formed out of the confused memories of her infancy, out of the little she could have seen of the exterior world, and out of that which she had learned from her conversations with her companions; with these visitors she conversed, answered in their names, commanded them, and received from them homage of every kind. From time to time religious thoughts disturbed these brilliant and fatiguing festivals. But religion, such as it had been taught to our poor child, and such as she had received it, did not banish pride; on the contrary, even sanctified and promoted it, as a means of obtaining a terrestrial felicity. Thus deprived of its essence, it was no longer religion, but a vain phantom like the others. In those intervals in which this phantom occupied the first place in her imagination, and there played the great person, the unfortunate girl, overpowered with confused terrors and a confused idea of duty, imagined that her repugnance to the cloister, and her resistance to the wishes of her family in the choice of her condition of life, was a

crime, and she promised in her heart to expiate this by voluntarily shutting herself up in a convent.

There was a law, that a young woman could not be accepted as a nun before having been examined by an ecclesiastic, called the Nuns' Vicar, or by some one deputed by him, to the end that it might be known certainly whether she entered the convent by her own choice; and this examination could not take place until a year after she had expressed her desire to the vicar in writing. The nuns who had taken upon themselves the sad office of making Gertrude bind herself for ever, with the least possible knowledge of what she did, seized one of these moments to make her transcribe and sign such a supplication. In order more easily to lead her to take this step, they did not fail to say and represent to her, that after all this was but a mere formality which (and this was true) would have no efficacy, except by the other acts which should follow, and which would depend upon her own will. Nevertheless, the supplication had not yet arrived at its destination, before Gertrude had repented of having signed it. She repented then of having been penitent, passing thus days and months in an incessant change of sentiment. She kept a long time concealed from her companions what she had done; sometimes in the fear of exposing to their contradictions a resolution which she considered good, sometimes restrained by the terror of making public a folly. At length came the desire of alleviating her mind, and of demanding counsel and encouragement. There was another law, which was that a young girl could not be admitted to this examination before having passed at least a month out of the cloister

where she had been educated. The year had almost elapsed since the supplication had been sent, and Gertrude was informed that in a short time she should be removed from the convent, and conducted to the paternal house, there to pass this month, and to take all the necessary steps for the completion of the work she had begun. The Prince, and the rest of the family, held all for certain, as though the affair were terminated; but the young girl had something quite different in her head; instead of taking these other steps, she thought how she should withdraw the first. In such anxious circumstances she resolved to open her heart to one of her companions, to the frankest and the one most ready to give resolute counsel. This one suggested to Gertrude to inform her father, in a letter, of her new resolve, since she had not courage enough to speak boldly to his face a denial, or would not. And since gratuitous advice in the world is so rare, the counsellor gave hers with much bantering about her dulness. The letter was concerted among four or five confidants, written in secret, and sent to its destination by means of much studied artifice. Gertrude waited with much anxiety for an answer, which never came; except that some days afterwards the Abbess sent for her to her cell, and with an air of mystery, disgust, and compassion, gave her an obscure hint of a great anger of the Prince, and of a fault which she must have committed, giving her, however, to understand that by conducting herself well in future she hoped this would be forgotten. The little girl understood, and did not dare to demand more.

At length arrived the day so much dreaded, yet so

much desired. Although Gertrude knew she went forth to a combat, yet the going out of the convent, the leaving these walls in which for eight years she had been shut up, the drive in the carriage through the open country, the seeing again the city, the palace, were sentiments full of a tumultuous joy. As far as the combat was concerned then, the poor little creature had already, by the direction of her confidants, taken measures, and, as we should now say, laid her plans. "Either they will wish to force me," thought she, "and then I shall stand firm; or they will be humble and respectful, but then I will not consent—the question is only not to say another *yes*, and that I will not say; or they will treat me with gentleness, and then I will be more gentle than they; I will weep, I will pray, I will move them to compassion; after all, I only demand not to be sacrificed. But, as it often happens with similar foresight, neither one thing nor the other took place. Days passed on without the father speaking of either the supplication, or the recantation, without the slightest proposition being made either with caresses or menaces. Her parents were serious, cold, severe towards her, without telling her the wherefore. She only perceived that she was regarded as a criminal, as an unworthy person—a mysterious anathema seemed weighing upon her, which separated her from her family, allowing her only sufficient intercourse with them, to make her feel her subjection. Very rarely, and only at stated hours, was she admitted to the society of her parents and eldest brother. Between these there appeared to reign a very great confidence, which rendered the abandonment in which Gertrude was

left still more perceptible and bitter. No one turned the discourse towards her; and if timidly she hazarded a word not absolutely necessary, it was either not attended to, or answered with a look of absence, of disdain, or of severity. But if, unable longer to support so bitter and humiliating a distinction, she insisted and endeavoured to familiarize herself with her family, or if she even implored a little love, the subject of the choice was immediately touched upon, and she was clearly made to feel that this was the means of acquiring the affection of her family. Thus Gertrude, who would never have desired affection on this condition, was obliged to draw herself back, refuse the first signs of kindness which she had so much longed for, and retire of her own accord, to her post of excommunication, and moreover, remaining there, appear to a certain degree to be herself in fault.

Such sentiments and objects of reality made a sad contrast to the joyous visions with which Gertrude had been so much occupied, and with which she still always occupied herself in the secrecy of her mind. She had hoped, in the splendid and much-frequented paternal house, to have enjoyed some real proof of the things which she had imagined, but she found herself in all deceived. The imprisonment was as sure and severe as in the convent; neither was a drive or walk ever spoken of; and a little passage which led out of the house into a neighbouring church, deprived her even of the least possibility of setting foot in the street. The society was graver, scarcer, and less varied, than in the convent. At every announcement of a visitor, Gertrude was obliged to mount up to the top of the house, there to shut herself up with some

old waiting-women, and to dine there, was there any guest. The domestics conformed their manners and discourses to the example and intentions of their master; and Gertrude, who following her own inclination would have treated them with a lordly familiarity, and who in the situation in which she now found herself would have been grateful for any demonstration of affection from them, as to one of their equals, and who condescended even to beseech it, remained humiliated and grieved to see her advances received with a manifest carelessness, although accompanied by a slight obsequiousness of ceremony. She observed, however, that one page, very different from the others, shewed her respect, and felt a particular kind of compassion for her. The behaviour of this boy was what Gertrude had seen the nearest approaching the order of things so much contemplated in her imagination, the most resembling the behaviour of her ideal creatures. By little and little an extraordinary something shewed itself in the manners of this young girl—an unaccustomed tranquillity and watchfulness,—the manner of one who has found something which concerns him much, which he would look at every moment, and preserve from the gaze of others. She was watched more, than ever; so much so that one morning she was surprised by one of her waiting-women folding a paper, upon which she would have done better to have written nothing. After a short struggle the paper remained in the hands of the waiting-women, and from them was passed into those of the Prince.

The terror of Gertrude, at the sound of his footsteps, can neither be described nor imagined; it was

this terrible Father; he was irritated, and she felt herself guilty! But when she saw him appear, with that frown, with that paper in his hand, she would have wished to be a hundred feet under ground,—not to say in a convent. His words were not many, but terrible; the intimated chastisement was not immediately being shut up again in the chamber under the guardianship of the woman who had made the discovery; this was only the beginning, a remedy for the moment, but another chastisement, obscure, undetermined, and therefore all the more fearful, was promised, was dimly seen in the future.

The Page was suddenly dismissed, as was only natural, and even he was also menaced with something terrible, if ever he dared to breathe a word on the subject. Giving him this intimation, the Prince administered two solemn boxes on the ear, thus to associate with the adventure a remembrance which should deprive the boy of any temptation to boast of it. It was not difficult to find some pretext for the dismissal of the Page; as to the daughter, it was said that she was indisposed.

Thus she remained with the beating of her heart, with shame, with remorse, and terror of the future, alone with this woman, hateful to her as the witness of her guilt and the cause of her disgrace. She in return hated Gertrude, on whose account she found herself reduced, without knowing for how long, to the wearisome life of a gaoleress, and become for ever the keeper of a dangerous secret.

The first confused tumult of these sentiments calmed itself by degrees; but then returning one by one into her mind, they increased there, and fixed themselves

to torment her more distinctly and at their leisure. What could this punishment be, thus menaced in enigmas? Many, various and strange, presented themselves to the ardent and inexperienced fancy of Gertrude. What appeared to her the most probable was to be conducted to the convent of Monza, to reappear there no longer as the Signorina, but as a culprit, and remain shut up there, who knows how long? Who knows with what treatment? Perhaps the most distressing idea which an imagination like hers, thus full of painful images, could present to her, was the apprehension of this disgrace. The words, the phrases, the commas, on this unfortunate sheet of paper, passed and repassed through her mind; she imagined them, looked at and weighed by a reader, so unforeseen, so different to the one for whom it was destined; she imagined it could have fallen under the eyes of her mother, of her brother, and of who knows how many others besides; and in comparison with this, the rest appeared a mere nothing. The image of the one who had been the first cause of all this scandal, was not wanting to torment the poor recluse; and you can imagine what a strange contrast this phantom must have made, seen among others so different, so serious, cold, and menacing. But precisely because she could never separate it from them, nor return one moment to these fugitive joys, without the present sorrows which were the consequence of their stepping forth, she commenced by little and little to return to it less frequently, to chase it from her remembrance, and to divert her mind from it. Neither so long, nor so willingly, did she dwell among those gay and brilliant fancies of a former time; these

were too much opposed to real circumstances, and to every probability of the future. The only castle in which Gertrude could imagine a tranquil and honourable retreat, which was not a mere fancy, was the convent, therefore she resolved to enter it for ever. Such a resolution she could not doubt would accommodate every thing, pay every debt, and change in a moment her situation. Against this proposition, it is true, opposed themselves the thoughts of all her life; but times were changed. In the abyss into which Gertrude had now fallen, and in comparison with what she had to fear at certain times, the condition of a nun, fêted, considered, and obeyed, appeared to her sweet and enviable. Two other sentiments of very different natures contributed also by intervals to diminish her ancient aversion; sometimes remorse for her error and a fantastic tenderness of devotion, sometimes her pride, embittered and irritated by the manners of her gaoleress, who often, one must confess, provoked by her, revenged herself now in frightening her with the menaced chastisement, now by making her blush for her transgression. At other times, when she wished to shew herself amiable, she assumed a tone of protection more odious even than insult. On such occasions the desire which Gertrude felt to escape from the clutches of this woman, and to appear to her in a condition elevated above her anger and her pity, became so lively and violent, that it made every thing seem lovely which could lead to its gratification. At the end of four or five days' imprisonment, one morning, Gertrude, wearied out and exasperated to an excess by one of these disputes with her guardian, hid herself in a corner of the

chamber, and there, her face concealed by her hands, remained some time endeavouring to devour her rage. She felt an overpowering yearning to see other looks, to hear other words, to be treated differently. She thought of her father and of her family. But it flashed across her mind, that it depended alone upon herself to find in them friends, and she experienced a sudden joy. This joy was followed by shame, and an extraordinary penitence for her fault, and an equal desire to expiate it. Not that now her will had fixed upon the determination, but it had never before entered into it with so much ardour. She rose, went to a little table, took the fatal pen, and wrote a letter to her father, full of affection and of hope, imploring his pardon, and shewing herself irrevocably decided, and ready to do every thing that should please him, and every thing which he should command.

CHAPTER X.

THERE are moments, particularly in youth, when the soul is disposed in such a manner that the least solicitation is sufficient to obtain anything which has the appearance of sacrifice; as a flower, scarcely opened, droops upon its fragile stem, ready to abandon its fragrance to the first breeze which caresses it. These moments, which one ought to admire with a timid respect, are precisely those which interested cunning spies out attentively and seizes, to bind an unguarded wish.

On reading this letter, the Prince —— saw suddenly the loophole open to his old and constant views. He sent to inform Gertrude that she should come to him; and expecting her, he disposed himself to strike the iron. Gertrude appeared, and without raising her eyes to her father's face, threw herself on her knees before him, and had scarcely breath to say "pardon!" He signed to her to rise; but, with a voice little calculated to reassure her, he replied, that it was not sufficient either to desire or to crave pardon; that this was a thing but too easy and too natural in every one who found themselves guilty, and who feared punishment; that, in short, it was necessary to merit pardon. Gertrude demanded submissively and tremblingly, what she ought to do. The Prince (one has not the heart to give him in this moment the

title of father) did not directly reply to this, but began talking tediously about Gertrude's fault; and these words made the soul of the poor girl smart, as does a wound under the touch of a rude hand. He continued, saying, that—when even—in case,—he should have had at first the intention of establishing her in the world, she herself had now placed an insurmountable obstacle in the way, since a man of honour, like himself, could never be audacious enough to present to a gentleman a young lady who had given such a proof of her disposition. The miserable listener was annihilated; then the Prince, softening by degrees his voice and words, continued saying, that, however, for every fault there was a remedy and mercy; and that hers was one of those for which the remedy was most clearly indicated; that she must see from this sad accident, that the life of the world was too full of dangers for her.

“Ah, yes!” exclaimed Gertrude, overcome by fear and shame, and moved in this moment by an instantaneous tenderness.

“Ah! you also comprehend this,” replied the Prince immediately. “Well, the past shall be spoken of no more,—all is cancelled; you have taken the only honourable and convenient course which remained to you; but since you have chosen it by your own free will, and with so good a grace, it is for me to render it agreeable in every thing to you,—it is for me to cause you to enjoy all the advantage and merit of this action; I will take charge of this.” Saying these words, he rang a little bell which stood upon a small table, and said to the servant who entered, “the Princess and the young Prince immediately;” and

then continued, turning to Gertrude, "I wish to make them participate in my joy; I wish that they should commence immediately to treat you in a manner suitable to the occasion. You have until now experienced what is a severe father, but henceforth you shall only know the affectionate parent."

At these words, Gertrude remained confounded. Now, she thought how this *yes*, which had escaped her lips, could have been able to signify so much; now she sought whether there were any means of contracting and restraining its sense; but the persuasion of the Prince appeared so entire, his joy so jealous, his amiability so conditional, that Gertrude dared not proffer a word which could trouble him the least in the world.

After a few moments, the Princess and the young Prince came, and seeing Gertrude there, looked in her face uncertain and full of wonder. But the Prince, with a gay and amiable air, which prescribed to them also a similar one, said, "Behold the stray sheep; let this be the last word which recalls this sad memory. Behold the joy of the family! Gertrude has no longer need of counsel, that which we desired for her good she has done spontaneously. She is resolved, she makes me understand ——" Here Gertrude raised towards her father a look half-astonishment, half-supplication, as though begging him to desist, but he continued, "that she is resolved to take the veil."

"Well done! Excellent!" exclaimed with one voice the mother and son, and both embraced Gertrude, who received these embraces with tears, which were interpreted as tears of joy. Then the Prince

was diffuse in explaining what he would do to render his daughter's fate gay and splendid. He spoke of the distinction which she would enjoy in the convent and in the country; that she should be like a Princess, like the representative of the family, that, as soon as her age should permit, she should be raised to the first dignity, and that in the meantime she should be only subject in name. The Princess and young Prince renewed every moment their congratulations and applause—Gertrude was as possessed by a dream.

“It will be proper then to fix the day for going to Monza, to make the request to the Abbess,” said the Prince; “how pleased she will be! I can say that all the convent know well how to appreciate the honour which Gertrude does it. And even—why not go to-day? Gertrude will willingly take the air.”

“Let us go then,” said the Princess.

“I will go and give orders,” said the young Prince.

“But——,” proffered Gertrude, submissively.

“Gently, gently,” replied the Prince, “we will leave it to her to decide; perhaps to-day she does not feel herself sufficiently disposed, and she would rather wait till to-morrow. Say, would you rather go to-day or to-morrow?”

“To-morrow,” replied Gertrude, in a weak voice, to whom it appeared something, having only gained a little time.

“To-morrow,” said the Prince solemnly, “she has fixed that it shall be to-morrow. Meanwhile I will go to the vicar, to arrange a day for the examination. Without farther being said, the Prince left the house, and really went (which was no small honour) to the

vicar, and there concerted that he should come in two days."

All the rest of this day, Gertrude had not a moment of comfort. She would have wished to repose her soul after so much agitation, to allow, so to say, her thoughts to clear themselves, to render account to herself of that which she had done, and of that which still remained to do; to know what she desired; to retard a moment this machine which, scarcely set in motion, hurried on with such precipitation; but there was no means of doing this. The occupations which succeeded each other without interruption entirely prevented all reflection. Immediately after the Prince's departure, she was conducted into the cabinet of the Princess, there to be dressed and adorned under her direction, by the hands of her own women. They had not yet given the finishing touch, when it was announced that dinner was served. Gertrude passed on through the respectful bows of the servants, who seemed to felicitate themselves upon her cure, and she found some of her nearest relations, who had been invited in haste to do honour to her, to congratulate her upon these two happy events, the recovery of her health, and the declaration of her determination.

The Sposina (it is thus they call young girls destined to the cloister, and Gertrude at her entrance was saluted by all with this name), the Sposina had enough to do to answer all the compliments which were made her on all hands. She was well aware that each of her answers was like a new consent and a confirmation, but how to answer differently? Directly after leaving the table came the hour of the drive. Gertrude went

in the carriage with her mother, and two uncles, who had been at dinner. After the ordinary tour, they drove into the Strada Marina, which covered then the space occupied at the present day by the public gardens; it was the place where the Signori came in their carriages to refresh themselves after the fatigues of the day. Gertrude's uncles spoke also to her as was proper on such a day, and one of them, who appeared to know better than the other every body, every carriage, every livery, and who had every moment something to say of Signor this, or of Signora that, interrupted himself all at once, and turning round to his niece, said,—“ Ah, you little rogue! you turn your back upon all this idle nonsense. You are a little sly puss; you leave all of us poor worldlings in our embarrassments, you retire to lead a holy life, and drive comfortably to paradise in your carriage!”

In the evening they returned home, and the domestics, descending in haste with torches, announced that many visitors were expected. The news had spread, and friends came to pay their respects. They entered the conversation-hall. Here the Sposina was the idol, the amusement, the victim. It was who should have her most to herself, who should give her sweetmeats, who should promise to go and see her, who should speak to her of the mother such-a-one her relation, or the mother such-a-one an acquaintance of hers, who should vaunt the air of Monza, who should paint an enchanting picture of the high rank she would enjoy there. Others, who had not yet been able to approach Gertrude thus besieged, stood waiting for an occasion to present themselves, and felt a certain remorse, until they had acquitted themselves

of this duty. By degrees the company withdrew; all left with an easy conscience, and Gertrude remained alone with her parents and her brother.

“At length,” said the Prince, “I have had the pleasure of seeing my daughter treated according to her rank! One must, however, confess that she has behaved admirably. She has shewn that she will not be in the least embarrassed, in assuming the first place, and in maintaining the honour of the family.”

They supped in haste, in order to retire immediately, and thus be ready early the next morning.

Gertrude, saddened, provoked, and yet at the same time a little vain of all these compliments, remembered at this moment all she had suffered from her gaoleress; and seeing her father thus disposed to gratify her in every thing, with but one exception, she desired to profit by the prosperity in which she found herself, and appease one of the passions which tormented her. Therefore she shewed a great repugnance to be with this woman, and complained strongly of her behaviour.

“How?” said the Prince, “has she been wanting in respect towards you? To-morrow, to-morrow, I will give her something which she shall remember long. Leave it to me, I will make her know who she is, and who you are. And, in any case, a daughter with whom I am contented, ought not to see near her a person who displeases her.” Saying this, he had another woman called, whom he ordered to wait upon Gertrude; who, however, deliberating upon the satisfaction she had received, was astonished to find in it so little savour, in comparison with the desire for it which she had experienced.

The woman who accompanied Gertrude to her

apartment was an old servant of the family, formerly governess of the young Prince, whom she had received from the arms of his nurse; educated almost to adolescence, and upon whom she had placed all her joys, all her hopes, all her glory. She was as happy about the decision made this day, as though it were one influencing her own fortune; and Gertrude, for the last diversion of the day, had to submit to the congratulations, the praises, the counsels of the old woman, and to hear her speak of certain aunts and great aunts who had been enchanted with the life of a nun; since being of this family they had enjoyed always the highest honours, had known how to keep one hand without the convent, and thus in their parlours had obtained things which the greatest ladies in their halls could never have attained. She spoke of the visits she would receive; one day she would see the young Prince with his bride, who would certainly be some very great lady; and then not only the convent, but also all the country would be in movement. The old woman spoke while assisting Gertrude to undress, she spoke when Gertrude was already in bed, and she still spoke when Gertrude slept. Youth and fatigue had been more powerful than sorrow. Her sleep was unquiet, agitated, full of painful dreams, and was only broken by the screaming voice of the old woman who came to wake her, in order to prepare her for the journey to Monza.

“ Rise, rise, Signora Sposina, it is broad day, and another hour will have passed at least before you are dressed and have finished your toilet. The Princess is dressing; she has been wakened four hours earlier than usual. The young Prince has already descended

to the stables, he will return directly, and will be ready to set out when you are. He is as lively as a hare—the little rogue! But he has always been so from quite a little child, and I can say so, who have carried him in my arms. But when he is ready one must not make him wait, because, although he is of the best temper in the world, he gets impatient then, and grows very angry. Poor little fellow! one must please him; it is his disposition; and then this time he has a little reason for it, since he puts himself out of the way for you. Woe to him who provokes the young Prince in these moments! He has regard for no one excepting the Prince, but one day he will also be Prince himself; let that day be, however, as far off as possible! Quick, quick, Signora Sposina. Why do you look at me so amazed? By this hour you ought to be out of your nest.”

At the image of the young Prince impatient, all the other ideas which had crowded the awakened mind of Gertrude dispersed themselves like a troop of sparrows at the sight of a kite. She obeyed, dressed herself in haste, let her hair be arranged, and appeared in the hall where her parents and brother were assembled. They made her seat herself in a large arm-chair, and brought her a cup of chocolate: taking the veil was the same thing as among the Romans assuming the vestal robe.

When it was announced that the carriage was ready, the Prince drew aside his daughter and said to her, “Now, Gertrude, yesterday you did yourself honour, to-day you must even surpass yourself. You have to appear at the convent, and in the country, where you are destined to play the first character.

They expect you there (it is needless to say the Prince had sent notice of this to the Abbess the day before), and all eyes will be upon you. Have dignity and be skilful. The Abbess will demand what is your desire, this is a mere formality; you can answer that you ask permission to be admitted to take the veil in the convent where you have been educated with so much love, where you have received so many favours; which is the pure truth. Say these few words with an independent air, so that it may not be said they have been whispered to you, and that you do not know how to speak by yourself. There, the good mothers know nothing of what has happened; it is a secret which shall rest buried in the family, and therefore do not make a contrite and doubtful face which could cause suspicion. Shew from what blood you spring; be polite and modest, but remember that in this place, excepting your family, no one is higher than you."

Without waiting for an answer, the Prince moved away, the Princess and the young Prince followed him; they descended all four the staircase, and got into the carriage. The embarrassments and the annoyances of the world, and the holy life of the cloister, particularly for young women of noble blood, were the themes of conversation during the drive. Towards the end of their journey the Prince renewed his instructions to his daughter, and repeated many times the form of the response. Entering Monza, Gertrude felt her heart ache, but her attention was attracted by I do not know what Signori, who stopped the carriage, repeating I do not know how many compliments. They recommenced their way, moving along at a foot's-pace towards the convent, between

the regards of the curious who rushed from all sides into the street to gaze at them. When the carriage paused before this wall, before this door so well known of old, Gertrude's heart ached still more. She descended from the carriage between two rows of people, whom the domestics ordered to stand back. All these eyes riveted upon the poor child obliged her continually to study her countenance; but what more than all the rest held her in subjection was the eyes of her father, towards which, although she feared them so much, she could not avoid turning hers every moment; these eyes governed her movements and her countenance as by means of invisible reins. They crossed the first court, entered another, and there saw the door of the inner cloister open and crowded with nuns. In the first row was the Abbess, surrounded by the elders; behind them, other nuns, *pêle-mêle*, some on tip-toe, and last of all the lay sisters standing on benches. You saw here and there gleam some little eye, peep forth some little face, between the black robes; these were the wildest and most courageous among the pupils, who introduced themselves, and penetrating between nun and nun, had succeeded in making a little hole for themselves so as to see something. From the multitude went forth many an acclamation; you saw many arms wave themselves in sign of welcome and joy. Arrived at the door, Gertrude found herself face to face with the Lady Abbess. After the first compliments, this one with a manner half-joyous, half-solemn, demanded what she desired in this place, since there was nothing which they could refuse her.

“I am here ——” commenced Gertrude, but at

the moment of pronouncing the words which decided thus irrevocably her fate, she hesitated an instant, and remained with her eyes fixed upon the crowd before her. She saw in this moment one of her most intimate companions, who regarded her with an air of compassion, and yet at the same time of malice, and who seemed to say,—ah, there is our brave one fallen at last! This sight woke again more livingly than ever in her soul old feelings, and restored also a little of her former courage; and she sought an answer somewhat different from the one which had been told her, when raising her eyes towards the countenance of her father, as though to essay her strength, she perceived there a disgust so deep, an impatience so menacing, that resolved by fear, with the same speed with which she would have fled a terrible object, she continued,—“I am here beseeching to be admitted to take the veil in this convent, where I have been brought up with so much love.” The Abbess quickly replied that it pained her much upon such an occasion, that the rules did not permit her to give an immediate reply, this reply must come from the united voices of the sisters, and must precede the permission of the superiors; but that Gertrude, knowing the sentiments which they entertained for her there, could foresee with certainty what this answer would be; and that in the meantime no rule prohibited the Abbess and sisters from manifesting the joy which they felt at this request. A confused murmur of congratulations and acclamations arose. Great baskets, filled with sweetmeats, were presented first to the Sposina, and then to her parents. Whilst some of the nuns fondled her, others complimented

the mother, others the young Prince, the Abbess prayed the Prince that he would come to the grate of the parlour, where she expected him. She was accompanied by two elders, and when she saw him appear, "Signor Prince," she said, "in obedience to the rules, to accomplish an indispensable form—although in this case—nevertheless I am obliged to tell you—that every time a daughter asks to be admitted to take the veil—the Superior, who I am unworthily—is obliged to inform the parents—that if by chance—they may have forced the will of their daughter—they will incur excommunication. But you will excuse me ——"

"Very good, very good," reverend Mother. I praise your exactitude, it is too just. But you cannot doubt ——"

"Oh! I think Signor Prince—I have spoken to fulfil precisely—as for the rest ——"

"Certainly, certainly, Lady Abbess."

Having exchanged these few words, the two interlocutors bowed to each other, and separated as though both one and the other were desirous to end the *tête-à-tête*, and each one went to rejoin the party awaiting them, one within, the other without, the convent.

"Come!" said the Prince, "Gertrude will soon be able to enjoy, at her leisure, the company of these good mothers. For this time we have wearied them enough." Thus saying, he saluted the Lady Abbess, the family followed his example; they renewed their compliments, and again set forth.

Gertrude, in returning, had no great desire to talk. Frightened at the step she had taken, ashamed of

her weakness, vexed with others and with herself, she sorrowfully counted over the occasions in which it yet remained for her to say *no*, and promised weakly and confusedly to herself that she would have more address and courage. All these thoughts, however, had not entirely dispelled her fears of the frowns of her father; so little so indeed, that when by a glance cast secretly she saw in his countenance that there remained no longer any trace of anger, but that, on the contrary, he appeared very well satisfied with her, this seemed so great a happiness that she was for a moment quite joyful.

As soon as they arrived it was necessary to change her dress, then came the dinner, then other visits, then the promenade, then the *conversazione*, then the supper. Towards the end of which, the Prince brought into the field another affair, the selection of the godmother. Thus is a lady called, who, at the request of the parents, becomes guardian and conductress of the young Sposina during the time which elapses between the supplication and the entrance into the convent,—time employed in visiting the churches, the public places, societies, villas, sanctuaries, every thing, in short, most remarkable in the town and its neighbourhood, to the end that the young girls, before pronouncing an irrevocable vow, may know what they renounce. “It is necessary to think about a godmother,” said the Prince, “since to-morrow the Nuns’ Vicar will come for the formality of the examination, and immediately afterwards Gertrude will be proposed in the chapter to be accepted by the Mothers.” Saying these words, he had turned towards the Princess, and she, believing that this was

an invitation to propose, commenced, "It would be ——" But the Prince interrupted, "No, no, Signora; the godmother must, before every thing, please the Sposina; and although general custom gives the choice to the parents, still Gertrude has so much judgment, so much caution, that she really deserves that an exception should be made in her favour." And then turning to Gertrude, with an air of one who announces a particular favour, he continued, "Every one of those ladies who have been here this evening, has the necessary qualifications for being godmother to a daughter of our house, there is not one, believe me, who will not consider this selection as a great honour: select."

Gertrude saw well that to make this selection was to give a fresh consent; but the proposition had been made with so much ceremony, that the refusal, however humble this were, would appear disdainful, or at least capricious and ungrateful. She took also this step, and named the lady who all the evening had pleased her the most, that is, the one who had lavished the most caresses upon her, praised her the most, treated her with those familiar, affectionate, and earnest manners, which, in the first moments of an acquaintance, counterfeit an old friendship. "An excellent choice!" exclaimed the Prince, who desired and expected precisely this. Were it art or chance; there had now happened to Gertrude that which often arrives when a card-player, passing quickly before your eyes a pack of cards, tells you to think of one which he will guess; but, in fact, he has made them all pass before your eyes in such a manner that you have only seen one. This lady had been beside

Gertrude all the evening, she had occupied herself so much with her, that it would have required a good effort of the imagination for Gertrude to have thought of another. So much eagerness had not been without a motive, the lady had fixed her eyes for a long time upon the young Prince as her son-in-law; therefore she regarded the affairs of the house as her own, and it was very natural that she should interest herself about this dear Gertrude no less than the nearest relations.

The next morning Gertrude woke with the thought of the Nuns' Vicar who should come, and whilst she was reflecting whether she could avail herself of this desired opportunity and draw back, the Prince sent for her. "Well, my daughter," he said, "so far you have conducted yourself admirably; to-day you will crown the work. All that has hitherto been done, has been done by your consent. If during this time any doubt, any little feeling of repentance, any youthful whims, should have arisen, you ought to have expressed them; but at the point at which things now are, it is no longer time to play the child. The excellent man who comes this morning will ask you a hundred questions regarding your vocation; whether you are entering the convent by your own free-will, the why and the wherefore, and many other things. If you waver in your answer, who knows how long he may keep you on the rack? It would be a weariness and torment for you; but a more serious misfortune could arise from it. After all the public demonstrations which have been made, the smallest hesitation that is seen in you might endanger my honour, might cause people to believe that I had mistaken one of your youthful caprices for a firm resolution,

that I had precipitated the affair,—that I had—done more things than I can tell. In this case I should find myself under the necessity of selecting between two sad alternatives, either to let the world form a false conjecture regarding my conduct, and this cannot possibly agree with what I owe to myself, or to reveal the true motive of your resolution, and ——” But here, seeing that Gertrude was become scarlet, that her eyes grew large, and her face contracted itself, like the leaves of a flower in the sultry heat which precedes a tempest, he cut short his discourse, and, with a severe air, replied, “Come, come; all depends upon yourself, upon your judgment. I know that you have a deal, and that you are not a girl to spoil at the end, an affair so well begun; but I must foresee every possibility. This shall not be spoken of any more, and we rest agreed that you will reply with frankness, and in such a manner as not to give rise to doubts in the mind of this good old man. In this manner you will get out of the affair much sooner.” And here, after having suggested some answers to the most probable questions, he began the usual discourse regarding the peace and joys which were prepared for Gertrude in the convent, and he conversed about this until a servant announced the Vicar. The Prince renewed, in haste, the most important instructions, and left his daughter alone with him, as was prescribed.

The good man arrived with the opinion already formed that Gertrude had a strong inclination for the cloister, because the Prince had said so when he came to invite him. It is true that the good priest, knowing that distrust was one of the most necessary virtues of

his office, held it for a maxim to give but little belief to similar protests, and to be on his guard against pre-occupation; but it rarely happens that the affirmative and confident words of a person full of authority of whatsoever kind, do not tinge with their colour the mind of the one who hears them. After the usual compliments, "Signora," he said, "I am come to play the part of the devil; I come to make doubtful that which in your supplication you have given as a certainty. I come to lay before your eyes the difficulties, and to assure myself that you have well considered them. Permit me to put these questions."

"Speak," replied Gertrude.

The good priest then began to question her according to the prescribed form of his rules. "Do you feel in your heart a free spontaneous resolution to become a nun? Have not menaces or flatteries been adopted? Has no authority been made use of to induce you to this? Speak without fear, and with sincerity, to a man whose duty it is to know your true desire, so as to prevent any violence being used towards you."

The true answer to such a question, presented itself suddenly in Gertrude's mind, with a terrible evidence. But, in order to give this answer, it was necessary to come to an explanation, to say with what she had been menaced, relate a long history. The unfortunate shrunk back from this idea terrified; sought in haste another answer; she only found one which could liberate her quickly and securely from this torture—the one the most opposed to the truth. "I take the veil," she said hiding her confusion, "I take the veil by my own desire—freely."

“Since when has this thought come into your mind?” Again demanded the good priest.

“I have always had it,” replied Gertrude, become, after the first step, more bold in lying against herself.

“But what is the principal motive which induces you to turn nun?”

The good priest did not know what a terrible note he touched; and Gertrude made a great exertion to prevent the effect which these words produced in her soul being visible in her countenance. “The motive,” she said, “is to serve God, and fly the dangers of the world.”

“But may not this be some disgust,—some, pardon me, some caprice? Often a momentary cause can make an impression which seems as though it would endure for ever, and then when the cause ceases, and the heart changes, then——”

“No, no!” returned Gertrude in haste; “the cause is such as I have told you.”

The Vicar, rather entirely to fulfil his duty than from persuasion that the thing was necessary, persisted in his questionings; but Gertrude was determined to deceive him. Besides the shame which she felt at acquainting this grave and good priest with her weakness, who also appeared so far from suspecting such a thing from her, the poor girl thought that, although he could certainly prevent her entering the convent, there his authority and protection would cease. That, when he was gone, she should remain alone with the Prince, and of what she should then have to endure in this house the good priest would know nothing; or even did he know, he could only, with all his good intentions, feel compassion for her,

—that compassion, tranquil and measured, which is generally as through courtesy felt for those who have given cause, or at least a pretence, for the injury which is done them.

The Vicar was weary of questioning sooner than the unfortunate was of lying; and hearing answers always suitable, and having no reason to doubt their candour, he changed at length his language, congratulated her, demanded, in a certain way, pardon for having in the performance of his duty delayed her thus long, adding what he considered most fitting to confirm her in this good resolution, and took his leave.

Crossing the apartments on his way out, he met the Prince, who appeared to be there by chance, and congratulated him moreover on the happy disposition in which he had found his daughter. The Prince, until that moment, had been in the most painful suspense; at this news he breathed again, and forgetting his accustomed gravity he almost ran towards Gertrude, lavished upon her praises, caresses and promises, with a cordial joy, with a tenderness for the most part sincere. Such a strange medley is the human heart!

We will not follow Gertrude in this continual whirl of spectacles and amusements, neither will we describe minutely and in order the sentiments of her mind during this time; it would be a history of sorrows and fluctuations too monotonous, and too much like what we have already described. The pleasantness of the country, the variety of the objects, this wandering here and there in the fresh air, rendered still more odious to her the idea of the place which she should enter for the last time and for ever. Still more poignant were the impressions which she received in

societies and in fêtes. The sight of each wife to whom this title was given in the most common and familiar sense caused her an intolerable envy and anguish; and sometimes the sight of other persons made her think that the hearing this title from their lips must be the height of happiness. At other times, the pomp of palaces, the splendour of their furniture, the hum and bustle of festivals, would communicate to her such an intoxication, such a desire to live joyously, that she promised herself to break her word, and suffer every thing sooner than return to the cold and death-like gloom of the cloister. But all these resolutions vanished upon a calmer consideration of the difficulties, and at one glance towards the countenance of the Prince. Sometimes also the thought that she must abandon for ever these enjoyments rendered bitter and sad this short experience of them, as an invalid suffering from thirst regards with hatred and even thrusts aside with disdain the spoonful of water which the physician has granted to his earnest prayers. In the meantime the Vicar has given the necessary attestation, and the permission to hold the chapter for the admission of Gertrude has arrived. The chapter met; two-thirds of the secret votes which were required, agreed, as one might expect, and Gertrude was accepted. She, wearied of this long martyrdom, desired to enter the convent as soon as possible. Certainly there was no one who would curb such an impatience. Her desire was therefore attended to, and conducted with pomp to the convent, she took the veil. After twelve months noviciate full of repentance, she found herself arrived at the moment of profession, at that moment when it was necessary to

pronounce a *no*, more strange, more unexpected, more scandalous, than ever; or repeat a *yes*, already repeated so many times. She repeated it, and was a nun for ever.

It is one of the singular and incommunicable privileges of the Christian religion, to be able to direct and console every human being, who, under any circumstance, or guided by any motive, has recourse to her. If for the past there is any remedy, she prescribes it, furnishes it, gives knowledge and strength to bring it into operation, let this be at whatever price it may; if there is none, she gives the means to realise in effect what is taught in the proverb, that is, make necessity a virtue. She teaches to continue with wisdom that which has been undertaken with levity, inclines the soul to embrace with willingness the yoke imposed by arbitrary power, and gives to a choice which was rash, but irrevocable, all the holiness, all the prudence, nay, we say it frankly, all the joys of the religious life. It is a path so constructed that, by whatsoever labyrinth or precipice a man arrives there and takes one step, he can henceforth travel on with security and faith, and reach joyously a peaceful goal. By this means, Gertrude could have been a holy and contented nun, spite of the manner in which she had become one. But the unhappy girl struggled vainly under her yoke, and thus only felt the more its weight and pressure. An incessant regret for her lost liberty, abhorrence of her present state, and a toilsome pursuit after desires, which could never be satisfied, were the principal occupations of her mind. She thought over the bitter past, she recalled to her memory all the circumstances by which she

found herself in her present position, and vainly a thousand times destroyed in thought that which she herself had constructed; she accused herself of cowardice; others, of tyranny and perfidy,—and eternally tormented herself. She idolized, and at the same time wept over, her beauty; deplored her youth, destined to struggle in a slow martyrdom; and envied in certain moments the first woman who presented herself,—were she of the lowest condition, were she of the worst fame,—who could freely enjoy these gifts in the world.

The sight of those nuns who had stretched forth a hand to draw her in was odious to her. She remembered the arts and subterfuges which had been put into operation, and paid them back with rudeness, caprice, and sometimes even with open reproach. The nuns were many times obliged to swallow this and be silent, because the Prince, although he had willingly tyrannised over his daughter so far as was necessary to make her enter the cloister, having now obtained his desire, would not have suffered so easily that others should oppose one of his blood; and the slightest noise made by her would cause them to lose powerful protection, or change peradventure the protector into an enemy. It seems as though Gertrude ought to have felt a certain affection towards the other sisters who had taken no part in these intrigues, and who, without having desired her as a companion, loved her as such, and who pious, occupied, and gay, shewed her by their example how even there it were not only possible to live, but also possible to be happy. But these even were hateful to her, but hateful from another reason. Their air of piety and contentment

appeared to her a reproach for her disquiet and whimsical conduct, and she allowed no opportunity to escape her of ridiculing them behind their backs as bigots, and of slandering them as hypocrites. Perhaps she would have felt less aversion towards them had she divined that the small black-balls found in the urn, which should decide her acceptation, had been precisely put in by them.

She seemed sometimes to find pleasure in being able to command, in being courted within the convent, and in receiving visits from without; in making some undertaking succeed; in bestowing her protection; in hearing herself called the Signora,—but what pleasure? The heart, finding in these things so little satisfaction, would have rushed from time to time to join with them, and enjoy at the same time the consolations of religion; but these consolations do not come, unless the others are abandoned: like the shipwrecked mariner, who, if he wish to grasp the plank which can conduct him in safety to the shore, must first open his hand and let go the sea-weed which he has seized with a mad instinct. A short time after her profession, Gertrude had been nominated instructress of the pupils; you can well imagine how these young girls must have gone on under such discipline. All her former confidants had left, but she had preserved the passions of that time, and in one manner or another the poor scholars must bear their weight. When it came into her mind that many of them were destined to live in this world from which she was for ever excluded, she felt towards them hatred, nay, even a desire of revenge; she kept them under, ill-treated them, and deducted, in anticipation, from the

pleasures which they should one day enjoy. Who had heard in these moments with what mighty anger she scolded them for any trifling fault would have believed her a lady of an indiscreet and savage austerity. On other occasions, her horror of the cloister, of the rules, and of obedience, burst forth in accents of quite an opposite character. Then she not only supported the clamorous diversions of her pupils, but even excited them; she joined in their games, and rendered them still more disorderly; she took part in their discourses, and led them further than had been the intention of those who commenced them. If one among the scholars said a word regarding the gossip of the Lady Abbess, the preceptress imitated it at a great length, and made of it quite the scene of a comedy; she mimicked the face of one nun, the manner of another, and would then laugh like a mad creature,—but this was laughter which left her no gayer than before. Thus she had lived for several years, neither having the means nor the opportunity to do more, when, as her misfortune would have it, an opportunity presented itself.

Among the other distinctions and privileges which had been granted her, in order to compensate for her not yet being Abbess, was that of having an apartment to herself. This part of the convent was continuous to a house inhabited by a young man, a scoundrel by profession, one of the many who, in those times, with their followers, and with the alliance of other scoundrels, could, to a certain extent, laugh at the laws and public power. Our manuscript calls him Egidio, without speaking of his surname. He, from one of his upper windows, which looked into a little court in this

quarter of the convent, had seen Gertrude sometimes walking to and fro in idleness, and, excited sooner than deterred by the daring and impiety of such an enterprise, he ventured one day to address her. The unfortunate replied. In the commencement she felt a contentment, not pure certainly, but very lively. In the shady void of her soul, an occupation strong and continuous, nay, one could almost say a powerful life, had infused itself, but this contentment resembled the restorative which the ingenious cruelty of the ancients poured out to the condemned, to give them strength to sustain their torments. In this time a great change was perceptible in her conduct, she became suddenly more regular, more tranquil, no longer gave way to her raillery and her murmurs; she shewed herself even affectionate and polite, so much so that the sisters congratulated each other on this happy transformation, so far were they from suspecting the true motive, and from comprehending that this new virtue was nothing else than hypocrisy added to her ancient vices. This appearance, this so to say exterior whitewashing, however, did not last long, at least not with this continuity and uniformity,—her customary disdain and caprices soon returned, her imprecations and raillery against the conventical imprisonment, expressed each time in a language unusual in such a place and in such a mouth, soon again made themselves heard. However, after each of these flights came repentance, and a great anxiety to make all forgotten by means of endearments and coaxing words. The sisters supported as well as they could these sudden changes, and attributed them to the Signora's whimsical and frivolous nature.

For some time it appeared no one suspected anything; but one day, when the Signora had come to high words with a lay sister, about I do not know what trifle, and permitted herself to ill-treat her beyond all measure, the sister, after having suffered and bitten her lips sometime in silence, losing at length her patience, let fall that she also knew something, and in time and place could speak. From this moment the Signora had no more rest. Not many days, however, passed over, before the lay sister was in vain expected one morning to her accustomed devotions. They sought her in her cell, but they did not find her; they called her at the pitch of their voices, but she did not reply; they sought her here, they sought her there; they hunted the house through from the garrets to the cellars, she was nowhere. And who knows what conjectures might have been formed, had they not discovered a hole in the garden wall, which circumstance made every one think she had escaped this way. Great search was made after her in Monza, in the neighbourhood, and particularly in Meda, the native town of the lay sister; they wrote to various quarters, but not the slightest intelligence was gained. Perhaps they would have been able to know something regarding her, had they, instead of seeking far away, dug the earth in the neighbourhood. After a deal of astonishment, for no one could have thought her capable of such a thing, and after a deal of talking, it was concluded that she must have gone a long, long way off; and as one of the sisters said, without hesitation, "She had taken refuge in Holland," it was immediately repeated, and held as certain, both within and without the convent, that

there she had taken refuge. It does not, however, appear that the Signora was of this opinion. Not that she expressed disbelief or combated this idea by her own private reasonings; if she had such, certainly never were reasons better dissimulated. There was nothing she abstained from so willingly as any reference to this history, nothing she troubled herself less about than sounding this mystery. But the less she spoke about it the more she thought. How many times in the day would the image of this woman come suddenly into her mind, plant itself there, and never move! How many times she would have desired to see her alive in reality, sooner than have her always fixed in her thoughts, sooner than be obliged day and night to find herself in company with this vain, terrible, insufferable form! How many times wished to hear her real voice, whatever it might pronounce, rather than hear always, in the depth of her soul, the fantastic murmur of this same voice, repeating words with a pertinacity, with an unmeaning obstinacy, which are never found in a living being!

About a year had elapsed since this event, when Lucia was presented to the Signora, and had with her the conversation with which our relation terminated. The Signora multiplied her questions regarding the persecutions of Don Rodrigo, and entered into certain particulars with an intrepidity which appeared, and must appear, more than strange to Lucia, who had never imagined that the curiosity of nuns could exercise itself upon such subjects. The judgments with which she intermingled these questions on what transpired, were not less strange. She appeared to laugh at the great terror which Lucia had always had

of this Signor, and demanded whether he were a monster to cause such fear; it was easy to be seen that she would have considered the coyness of the young girl foolish and unreasonable, had it not been for the preference given to Renzo; and regarding him she demanded questions which amazed Lucia, and made her blush. Perceiving, then, that she had let her tongue follow too freely the wanderings of her mind, she endeavoured to correct her foolish gossip, and interpret it to the best advantage. But she could not prevent an unpleasant astonishment, and a confused terror remaining in Lucia's mind.

Scarcely was she alone with her mother, than she opened her heart; but Agnese, as having more experience, despatched with a few words these doubts, and cleared up the mystery. "Do not be astonished," she said; "when thou hast known the world as well I do, thou wilt see these are not things to wonder at. These gentlefolks, more or less, for one thing or another, have all a grain of folly. One must let them say what they like, particularly when one has need of them, and appear to listen to them seriously, as though they said what was just. Hast thou heard how she cut me short, as though I had said some folly? I did not appear to be astonished. They are all in this manner. But with all this, heaven be praised, that this Signora appears to have taken so to thee, and will really protect us. And for the rest, if thou canst but escape; and it should happen to thee ever to have to do with gentlefolks—thou wilt see, thou wilt see, thou wilt see."

The desire of obliging the Superior, the pleasure of protecting, the thought of the good reputation

which a protection thus piously employed could gain her, a certain inclination for Lucia, and even a certain consolation in doing good to an innocent creature, in the succouring and consoling the oppressed, had really disposed the Signora to take the fate of these two poor fugitives to heart. At her request, and through her care, they were lodged in a quarter of the *fattoressa*, near the cloister, and treated as though they were attached to the service of the convent. The mother and daughter rejoiced together in having thus quickly found a secure and honourable asylum. They would have been well satisfied to remain entirely unknown, but this was no such easy matter in a convent, particularly as there was a man very much interested in having intelligence regarding one of them, and in whose soul, anger, at thus having been outwitted and deluded, had now united itself to the ancient passions and pique.

Here we will leave the women in their retreat, and return to Don Rodrigo's palace, at the time when he was awaiting the issue of this criminal expedition.

CHAPTER XI.

As a pack of hounds, after having in vain followed a hare, return home to their master mortified, their noses touching the earth, their tails between their legs, so in this night of alarms returned the bravoës to the palace. Don Rodrigo was pacing in the gloom up and down a vast and uninhabited apartment of the upper story, which overlooked the esplanade. Sometimes he paused, listened, looked through the half-opened window-shutters, full of impatience, and with some uneasiness; not alone on account of the uncertainty of this enterprise, but also on account of its possible consequences, for this was the most important and daring undertaking which this brave man had yet attempted. He, however, reassured himself, thinking of the precautions taken to prevent all traces, if not all suspicions. "As to suspicions," thought he, "I can laugh at them. I should like to see who would come to look whether there were or were not a young girl here. Let him come, let him come; the boor, he shall be well received! Let the Friar come! let him come! The old woman? Let her go to Bergamo, the old soul. The law! Pah, the law! The Podestà! he's neither a child nor a fool. And at Milan? Who will listen to them at Milan? Who knows that there are such people? They are like lost people on the

earth — they have not even a patron — they are people who are nothing. Come, come, there is no cause for fear. How astonished Attilio will be to-morrow! He shall see whether I only talk, or whether I act. And then — if any embarrassment should arise — how do I know? — some enemy who should seize upon this occasion. Attilio will know how to counsel me; the honour of the whole family will be at stake.” But the thought with which he most occupied himself, since in it were combined a calm for his doubts and food for his principal passion, was the thought of what flatteries and promises he should make use of in order to appease Lucia. “She will be very much frightened,” thought he, “at finding herself here alone in the midst of these ruffians, with faces which — I am the only one here with a human countenance — by Bacchus! she will be forced to fly to me; she will supplicate, and if she supplicates ——”

Whilst he imagined these fine things, he hears a sound of footsteps, he goes to the window, opens it a little, puts out his head, — it is they! “And the litter.” Diavolo, where is the litter? Three — five — eight — they are all there. There is Griso himself; but the litter is not with them, — diavolo! diavolo! Griso shall account to me for this.”

When they had entered, Griso placed in a corner of a room on the ground-floor, his staff, took off his large hat, and his frock; and then, as summoned to the performance of his office, which at this moment no one envied, he ascended to render to Don Rodrigo an account of what had happened. This impatient master, who expected him at the head of the staircase, seeing him appear with the foolish and stupid air of

an outwitted knave, said, or rather cried,—“ Well, Signor Bully, Signor Captain, Signor *Leave-all-to-me?* ”

“ It is hard,” replied Griso, resting one foot on the first step, “ it is hard only to receive reproaches, after having laboured faithfully, endeavoured to fulfil one’s duty, and even risked one’s life.”

“ How has it gone on? Let us hear, let us hear,” said Don Rodrigo, and led the way to his chamber whither Griso followed him, and immediately related what he had arranged, done, seen or not seen, heard, feared, repaired; and all this with that confusion, with that doubtfulness and wildness, which must necessarily have reigned together in his ideas.

“ Thou art not in fault, and thou hast conducted thyself well,” said Don Rodrigo; “ thou hast done all that was possible, but under this roof there must be a spy——! If there is—— if I discover him,—and I will discover him if there is one,—I can tell thee, Griso, that he shall be properly dealt with.”

“ Such a suspicion,” said Griso, “ has passed also through my mind; and should it be true, and should such a rogue be discovered, the Signor Padrone ought to place him in my hands. A fellow who has found amusement in making me pass a night such as this! it is for me to pay him off for it. However, from various circumstances, the idea has occurred to me that there must still be some other intrigue which just at the present moment we cannot understand. To-morrow, Signor, to-morrow, we will bring it to light.”

“ At all events you have not been recognised?”

Griso replied that he hoped they had not been; and the conclusion of the discourse was, that Don

Rodrigo ordered three things to be done on the morrow, three things which Griso would have been very well able to think of himself. To send very early the next morning two men to intimate certain things to the Consul,—which was done, as we have already seen; to despatch two others to the ruinous old house to watch round it, and keep away any idler who might direct his steps thither, and conceal from every eye the litter until the following night, when it should be sent for; the third command was to go himself, and send also some of the most cunning and clever bravoës to mingle with the populace, and thus discover something regarding the confusion of the night. Having given these orders, Don Rodrigo retired to rest, and allowed Griso to do the same, dismissing him with many words of praise, in which might be observed an ardent desire to make up for the hasty reproaches with which he had received him.

Go to sleep, poor Griso, for thou must, indeed, stand in need of it. Poor Griso! Busied all the day, busied half the night, without counting the danger of falling into the clutches of these villains, or drawing upon thy head a reward *for the rape of an honest woman*, to add to those which are already set upon thee,—and to be received in this manner? But, alas! it is only too often that the world thus repays good services. But thou, however, hast been able to see, in this instance, that sometimes justice, if not at first, arrives sooner or later, even in this world. Go to sleep for the present; a day will come when thou, perhaps, wilt have to give another proof of thy attachment and prowess,—a proof even still more remarkable than the one thou has just given.

The following morning, when his master arose, Griso was already busied in fresh affairs. Don Rodrigo went immediately in search of the Count Attilio, and the Count, seeing him appear, assumed an air of raillery, and cried, 'San Martino!'

"I do not know what to say," replied Don Rodrigo, approaching him; "I will pay the wager, but it is not this that troubles me the most. I have told you nothing, because I had thought of giving you a little surprise this morning. But enough—I will now tell you all."

"The Friar has had a hand in this affair," said the cousin, after listening to the recital with more gravity than one would have expected from such a giddy brain. "The Friar," he continued, "with his innocent face, and his silly maxims, I hold to be an old hypocrite and an old rogue. And you have never confided in me, never told me clearly about what he came bothering you the other day!"—Don Rodrigo here related the conversation.—"And you had all this patience!" exclaimed Attilio; "and you have let him depart as freely as he came?"

"How! would you have me draw down upon myself the wrath of all the Capuchins in Italy?"

"I do not know," said the Count, "whether in this moment I should have recollected that there were other Capuchins in the world, than this daring rascal; but come,—following the rules of prudence, are the means wanting by which you can demand satisfaction from a Capuchin's arm? You have only at the proper time to redouble your attentions towards the whole body, and then you can with impunity chastise one of its members. But enough,—he has

escaped a punishment which he so well merited, but I will take him under my protection, and have the pleasure of teaching him how to speak to such as me."

"Do not make matters worse."

"Confide for once in me, I will serve you both as a relation and a friend."

"What do you think of doing?"

"I do not yet know; but most assuredly I shall pay the Friar. I will think about it,—and—the Signor Uncle of the Secret Council is the man who must render me this service. Dear Signor Uncle! How much I amuse myself whenever I make a politician of this class work for me! The day after to-morrow I shall be in Milan, and in one way or another the Friar shall be dealt with as he deserves."

The breakfast here made its appearance, but did not interrupt the discussion of so important an affair. The Count Attilio spoke with vivacity, although he took the side which his friendship for his cousin and their common honour demanded, according at least to his idea of honour and friendship, he could not prevent himself from laughing at the misadventure of his relation and friend. But Don Rodrigo, who discussed his own cause, and who thinking of quietly gaining an important point, had failed most signally, was agitated by more serious passions, and occupied with more vexatious thoughts.

"These fellows," said he, "will gossip finely in the neighbourhood. But what does that matter to me? As to the law, I laugh at it. There are no proofs, and even were there, I should equally scorn them. I have intimated this morning to the Consul that

he shall take good care and not make his deposition regarding this event. Nothing disagreeable to me will result from the affair; but such gossiping, when it continues, annoys me; it is already too much to have been so barbarously joked with."

"You have done extremely well," replied the Count Attilio; "your Podestà—your brutal—your wearisome—your foolish Podestà—is a gentleman—a man who knows his duty, and when one has to do with such a person, it is necessary to use a deal of caution to prevent him getting into difficulty. If a rogue of a Consul makes a deposition, the Podestà, however well inclined he may be, is obliged ——"

"But you," interrupted Don Rodrigo, with a little anger, "you spoil my affairs by your foolish habit of contradicting him in every thing, and ridiculing him upon every occasion. Diavolo! why may not a Podestà be stupid and obstinate, if for the rest he is a worthy man."

"Do you know, cousin," said the Count Attilio, "do you know I begin to think you are a little afraid? You treat as serious even the Podestà ——"

"Come, come, have not you yourself said that it is necessary to pay attention to this?"

"I have; and when an affair of importance is at stake, I will let you see that I am no child. Do you know what I will do for you? I am the man to go in person and pay the Podestà a visit. Ah! will he not be charmed with this honour? I am the man to let him talk of the Count-Duke and the Spanish Castellan by the half-hour, and let him always be right, should he even say the most extravagant things in the world. I will throw in a word regarding my

uncle the Count of the Secret Council, and you know what effect these words will produce in the ears of a Podestà. And then, after all, he really has more need of our protection than we of his condescension. I will do good; I will go there and leave him better disposed towards you than ever."

After these and similar words, the Count Attilio went forth to the chase, and Don Rodrigo awaited with impatience the return of Griso, who at the hour of dinner at length arrived to make his relation.

The tumult of the night had been so noisy, and the disappearance of these people from the little village was such a great event, that the inquiries, whether instigated by interest or curiosity, had been naturally many, warm, and incessant; and those informed of these things were by far too numerous to agree all to be silent. Perpetua could not shew herself at the door without being assailed by people to relate who it was that had caused her master this great fright; and Perpetua, considering all the circumstances, and seeing how she had been taken in by Agnese, felt such rage against her perfidy, that she was forced to relieve her mind. Not that she went and complained to people of the means employed to impose upon her—no, regarding this she did not breathe a word; but she could not entirely pass over in silence the trick played upon her poor master, and above all that this trick had been concerted and put in execution by this innocent girl, by the good young man, and by this excellent widow. Don Abbondio might indeed command her resolutely, and pray her affectionately, to keep silent; she might indeed tell him that it was unnecessary to recommend to her a thing thus clear

and natural,—but it is certain that so great a secret in the mind of this poor woman, was like new wine in an old and badly hooped cask, which works, ferments, and boils, and even if it does not send the bung into the air, trickles about, oozes out in froth, leaks between the staves, and drops here and there, so that any one may taste it, and tell pretty nearly what wine it is. Gervaso, who could scarcely believe it true, that for once he was better informed than other people, did not think it a slight honour to have experienced so great a fright; and who, having co-operated in an affair which appeared criminal, seemed all at once to have become a man like the others, was ready to burst with his desire to boast of it. But although Tonio, who thought seriously of the possible investigation and law-suits, and of the account he had rendered, might command him, holding his clenched fist before his face, yet he could not stifle every word. And even Tonio himself, having been out of the house at an unusual hour, returning home with an unusual step and appearance, and suffering an agitation of mind which disposed him to sincerity, could not refrain from telling his wife, who also was not mute. The one who spoke the least was Menico, because scarcely had he recounted his history and the object of his expedition to his parents, than their son's having taken part in an attempt to frustrate any scheme of Don Rodrigo's seemed to them so terrible a thing that they would scarcely allow the child to finish his relation. They then commanded him in the strongest and most menacing terms not to let fall the slightest hint; and the following morning, not believing themselves sufficiently secure, they resolved to keep him

shut up in the house for that day, and perhaps for even longer. But what happened? They themselves gossiping with the villagers, even without wishing to appear better informed than they, when it came to the obscure point of the flight of our three poor friends, of the hour, and the wherefore, and whither,—they added, as a thing already well known, that they had taken refuge at Pescarenico; thus this circumstance also entered with the general discourse.

With all these pieces of information joined together, and united as one is accustomed to do, and with the fringe which one naturally adds in the sewing, there was enough to make out a history of such certainty and clearness, that even the most critical intellect must have been satisfied. But this invasion of the bravoës, an event which was too grave, and had made too much noise to be forgotten, but of which no one had any positive knowledge, was the event of all others which rendered the whole history confused. The name of Don Rodrigo was murmured everywhere, about this name every one was of accord; the rest was all strange conjecture. A deal was spoken about the two great bravoës who had been seen in the street when evening closed in, and of the others who had stood at the entrance of the hostel; but what light could be gained from this meagre fact? They certainly questioned the host as to who had been at his house the preceding evening, but the host did not recollect whether he had seen any one that evening, and always ended by saying that an inn was like a sea-port. Above all, this pilgrim, seen by Stefano and Carlandrea, confounded them, and confused their conjectures; this pilgrim, whom the ruffians wanted to

murder, who was gone off with them, or whom they had carried off,—what was he come to do? It was a soul escaped from purgatory to succour the two women—it was a damned soul—the soul of a scoundrel—of an imposter pilgrim which returned at night to unite itself to those who did such deeds as it had been accustomed to do when in the body,—it was a living and veritable pilgrim, whom these bravoës wished to murder, fearing lest he should cry out and alarm the whole village,—it was (only see what people will imagine!) one of these villains disguised as a pilgrim! It was this, it was that,—in short, it was so many things, that all the sagacity and experience of Griso would have been insufficient to have discovered who this really was, had Griso been obliged to learn this part of the history from the people's discourse. But as the reader knows what rendered it confused to others, was precisely the most clear to him. Making use of this fact as a key to the other information gained by himself and by means of other inferior spies, he could on the whole make a sufficiently distinct relation to Don Rodrigo. He shut himself up immediately with his master, and informed him of the deed attempted by the two unfortunate betrothed, which naturally explained the empty cottage and the sound of the bell, without making it necessary to suppose traitors in the house, as these two gentlemen had imagined. He informed him of the flight, and even for this it was easy to find a reason; the fear of the two betrothed discovered in their enterprise, or some news of the invasion given when this became known and the village was in an uproar. He said, finally, that they had taken refuge at Pescarenico; farther than there

his knowledge did not extend. It was agreeable to Don Rodrigo to be certain that no one had betrayed him, and to see that no traces remained of his deed; but this was only a fugitive and slight pleasure. "They have fled together!" he cried; "together!—And this rogue of a Friar—this Friar!" These words issued hoarsely from his throat, he ground his teeth and bit his nails, whilst his whole aspect became as hideous as his passions. "This Friar shall pay for this! Griso!—I know not who I am—I will know—I will find them—this very evening I will know where they are. I shall have no peace until then. To Pescarenico—quick—to know, to see, to find—four scudi immediately, and my protection for ever! This very evening I will know. And this rascal!—this Friar! ——"

Griso was again in the field; and in the evening of the same day was able to give his patron the desired information; and these are the means he employed. One of the greatest pleasures of this life is friendship, and one of the greatest pleasures of friendship is having some one in whom to confide a secret. Now friends are not divided into couples, like husbands and wives; every one generally speaking has more than one friend, and thus is formed a chain, of which no one has ever been able to discover the end. Therefore, when a friend procures himself this pleasure by depositing a secret in the bosom of another, he gives to this one the desire of procuring for himself in his turn the same pleasure. It is true that he beseeches him to say nothing of this to any one; but whoever should receive this condition in its most rigorous sense, would immediately cut short the course of this

pleasure. But general practice has willed that he shall oblige himself only to confide it to a friend equally trustworthy, imposing upon him the same conditions. Thus from one confidential friend to another the secret rolls on and on by this immense chain, until at length it reaches the ears of him or her to whom the first who spoke intended it should never arrive. The secret would, however, generally remain a long time on the road, had every one only two friends; the one who confides it to him, and the one to whom he repeats it under condition of his silence. But there are privileged men who relate it to a hundred, and when the secret has reached one of these, its course becomes so rapid and multiplied, that one is unable to follow its track. Our author has never been able to ascertain by how many mouths the secret which Griso was ordered to discover had passed; the fact is, that the good man who had conducted the women to Monza, returning towards evening to Pescarenico with his cart, met by chance a confidential friend to whom he related in great confidence the good work which he had done, and its consequences; and Griso, upon his return to the palace two hours after, could inform Don Rodrigo, that Lucia and her mother were concealed in a convent at Monza, and that Renzo had pursued his way to Milan.

Don Rodrigo experienced a wicked joy at hearing of this separation, and felt again rise within him something of the wicked hope of gaining his end. He reflected upon the means of attaining this a great part of the night, and rose the next morning with two designs—the one formed, the other merely imagined.

The first was to send Griso immediately to Monza, there to obtain clearer information regarding Lucia, and to learn whether it were possible to attempt anything there. He, therefore, had Griso summoned, and placing the four scudi in his hand, praised him again for the ability with which he had gained them, and gave him the order he had just premeditated.

“Signor ——” said Griso, with hesitation.

“How! Have I not spoken clearly?”

“If you could only send some one else ——”

“How?”

“Illustrious Signor, I am ready to risk my life for my master,—it is my duty; but I know also that my master does not wish thus heedlessly to risk the lives of his subjects.”

“Well?”

“Your most illustrious lordship knows very well that a great price is set upon my head;—and—here I am under the protection of your lordship; we are a band; the Signor Podestà is a friend of the house; the constables treat me with respect, and I also—it is a thing which does one but little honour; but to live quietly, I treat them as friends. In Milan, the livery of your lordship is known; but in Monza, it is *I*, on the contrary, who am known; and does your lordship know—I do not say this to boast of myself—that he who delivers me up to justice does a good deed? He receives a hundred scudi, and the permission to free two outlaws.”

“Diavolo!” exclaimed Don Rodrigo, “thou art like a yard-dog which has scarcely the courage to attack the legs of those who pass before the door, looking all the time behind him, whether the house-

hold will support him, and never daring to move from the house."

"I believe, Signor Padrone, that I have given proof that ——"

"Well?"

"Well!" replied Griso boldly, thus taken at his word, — "well, your lordship will not consider what I have spoken; lion's heart, and hare's legs, and I am ready to set forth."

"I have not said that thou shouldst go alone. Take with thee a couple of the boldest men. Spegiato and Tira-dritto; be courageous, and be Griso. Who, thinkest thou, would not be glad to let three such faces as yours pass by quietly, when they are going about their own affairs. The constables of Monza must be very much wearied of life, if they would for a hundred scudi risk it in so perilous a game. And then, and then,—I do not believe I am so unknown there, that the quality of my servant counts for nothing."

After having thus piqued Griso, he gave him more ample and particular instructions. Griso took with him his two companions, and departed with a bold and joyous air, cursing, however, in his heart, Monza, and the rewards, and the women, and the caprices of his master; he pursued his way like a wolf, which, driven on by famine, his sides shrunk in, and with ribs which might be counted, descends from the mountains where there is nothing but snow, advances with suspicion into the plain, and stops at every step with one paw raised, shaking his skinny tail,

With raised snout, snuffing in the tainted air,
to discover whether the wind bear to him the scent
of man or steel, pricks up his sharp ears, and rolls his

bloody eyes from which gleam at once the love of prey and terror of the chase. For the rest,—should any one desire to know whence cometh this beautiful verse,—it is taken from an unedited *diablerie* concerning the Crusades and the Lombards, which soon will no longer be unedited, and will make a fine noise. I have taken it, because it happened to come *à propos*; and I say this, in order not to make myself fine in the robes of another; let no one, however, think that this is a scheme of mine, to make known to the public that I and the author of this *diablerie* are like brothers, and that I grope among his manuscripts as much as it pleases me.

The other thing which concerned Don Rodrigo was to discover the means by which to prevent Renzo from returning to Lucia, or from setting foot again in his native village. And to promote this end, he contrived to spread reports of menaces and snares which had been laid for him, reports which reaching his ear, by means of some good friend, would take away his desire to return to those parts. He thought, however, the surest way would be to have him banished out of the state; but to succeed in this enterprise, he perceived that law would have been more able to serve him than violence. If he could only, for example, give a little colouring to the attempt made in the Curate's house, painting it is a seditious act, and by means of the Doctor Azzecca-Garbugli give the Podestà to understand that this was a sufficiently grave offence for him to issue against Renzo a good warrant of arrest. But he considered that it was not proper for him to meddle in this ugly business; and therefore he, without longer puzzling his brain, resolved to disclose his

intentions to the Doctor Azzecca-Garbugli, should this be necessary, and thus make him comprehend his desire. "The edicts are many," thought he; "the Doctor is no goose; he will know how to find something for my case; he will know how to seek some quarrel with this fellow, otherwise I will change his name:"* but (only see how things happen in this world!) whilst he thought of the Doctor, as the man the most able to serve him in this affair, another man, the man one should least have imagined, Renzo himself, so to say, was working with all his heart to serve Don Rodrigo, in a manner more certain and more speedy than any one which the Doctor would have been able to imagine.

I have many a time seen a dear child who is more lively to confess the truth, than is necessary, but who, nevertheless, by every token, promises one day to become a clever man; I have seen him, very often, I say, very busy towards evening, endeavouring to drive home to their resting-place his troop of Guinea-pigs, which he allowed during the day to run about in a small garden. He would have liked them to enter their den altogether; but he fatigued himself in vain, one scampered off to the right, and whilst our little herdsman ran to drive him back to the troop, another, two, three, would run away in every direction, so that, at length, after growing somewhat impatient, he was forced to adapt himself to their humour, push in those which happened to be nearest, and afterwards the others, by ones, by twos, or by threes, as they might chance to be. We are obliged to play a similar game with our personages: having placed Lucia in safety, we ran to Don Rodrigo, and

* Azzecca-Garbugli, Seek-Quarrel.

now we must leave him to follow Renzo, of whom we have lost sight.

After the sorrowful separation, which we have related, Renzo travelled on from Monza to Milan in that state of mind which every one may easily imagine. To abandon his house, to leave his trade, and what was more than all the rest, to remove himself from Lucia, to travel along a strange road without knowing where to repose himself,—and all this on account of this scoundrel! When he touched in thought upon one or other of these things, he became possessed by rage and the desire for vengeance; but then he remembered the prayer which the good Friar had recited with him in the church of Pescarenico, and his thoughts amended themselves,—then his anger would again awaken, but seeing a saint painted upon the wall, he raised his hat, paused a moment, and prayed again; so that, during this journey, he had murdered Don Rodrigo in his heart, and brought him to life again, at least twenty times. The road was buried between two high banks—muddy, stony, ploughed up by deep ruts, which after rain became perfect brooks; and at certain places, where the road lay even still lower, it was entirely flooded, so that you might have gone over it in a boat. At such places a little steep path, after the manner of stairs, up the bank, would indicate that other pedestrians had made themselves a road in the fields. Renzo ascended by one of these paths to the higher ground, and saw the immense mass of the cathedral isolated in the plain, as though it rose not out of the heart of a city, but sprang up in a desert: he suddenly paused, forgetting all his woes, to contemplate thus from far

this eighth wonder of the world, of which he had heard so much said from his earliest childhood. But after a few moments he turned round and saw those indented mountain summits, he saw distinct and elevated his Resegone, he felt his blood boil, he gazed sorrowfully in this direction, and then sorrowfully turned his back, and pursued his road. By little and little he began to distinguish the spires, towers, cupolas, and roofs; he descended again into the high road, and continued walking along it for some time, then, perceiving that he approached the city, he accosted a passer-by, and bowing as politely as he possibly could, said, "Will you be so good, sir——"

"What do you wish, my good youth?"

"Could you direct me the shortest road to the Capuchin monastery, where Father Bonaventura is?"

The man whom Renzo addressed was a rich inhabitant of one of the suburbs, who, having gone this morning to Milan about certain affairs, was returning home in great haste, without having transacted any of his business; and fearing he should not arrive in time could very well have dispensed with this interruption. Spite, however, of this, without giving any sign of impatience, he replied very sweetly, "My dear, sir, there is more than one monastery; you should tell me more clearly which is the one you seek."

Renzo then drew from his bosom Father Cristoforo's letter, and shewed it the Signor, who, having read upon it *Porte Orientale*, gave it back to him, saying, "You are fortunate, my good youth, the monastery you seek is but a short distance from here. Take this little path to the left, it is the shortest, in a few minutes you will reach the corner of a long low

building, it is the *lazzaretto*, follow the ditch which surrounds it, and you will arrive at the Eastern-gate. Enter, and, after three or four hundred steps, you will see before you an open space in which grow some beautiful elm-trees; there is the monastery, you cannot mistake it. God be with you, my good youth!" and accompanying these last words with a graceful motion of the head, he took leave of Renzo. Renzo remained astonished and edified by the politeness of these citizens towards country-people; but he did not know that to-day was an extraordinary day, a day when the cloaks humbled themselves before the jackets. He followed the road which had been indicated to him, and soon found himself at the Eastern-gate. It is not, however, necessary that at this name, the reader should picture to himself the images which now are associated with it. When Renzo entered Milan by this gate, the road beyond it ran only in a straight line, the length of the *lazzaretto*, and then prolonged itself, winding and narrow, between two hedges. The gate itself consisted of two pillars, with a pent-house to shelter these two pillars, and on one side a small house for the custom-house officers. The bastions descended in an irregular descent, and the ground presented a rough and uneven surface, strewn with rubbish which had been thrown there. The road which opened itself before him, as he entered by this gate, was not very unlike that which now presents itself to those who enter by the Tosa-gate. A small ditch ran through the middle of the road to within a short distance of the gate, dividing it thus into two little paths covered with dust or mud, according to the season. At the spot

where was, and still is, the lane called the Borghetto, the little ditch loses itself in a common-sewer. Here stood a column with a cross upon it, called the column of San-Dionigi; on the right and left were gardens surrounded by hedges, and, at intervals, little houses, mostly inhabited by washerwomen. Renzo entered the gate, and passed on, not one of the custom-house officers took notice of him,—a circumstance which seemed to him very strange, since he had heard such of his countrymen, who could boast of having been at Milan, relate extraordinary things of the searching and questioning which those who arrived from the country were subjected to. The street was deserted, and had it not been for a distant hum which indicated some great movement, it would have appeared to him an uninhabited city. He went on, not knowing what to think of all this, and saw upon the earth certain banks, white and soft, like snow, but snow it could not be, since snow does not fall in straight lines, nor generally at this season. He stoops down, looks at, and touches it, and finds that it is—flour! “There must, indeed, be a great abundance at Milan,” said he to himself, “if they can thus squander away the gifts of God. They, nevertheless, give it out that the famine is everywhere. Only see what they say to keep the poor quiet, down in the country!” But after taking a few more steps, he arrived at the column, and saw at its base something still stranger; he saw upon the steps of the pedestal certain things scattered about, which certainly were not stones, and which, had they been in a baker’s-shop, he would not have hesitated a moment to have called bread. But Renzo did not dare thus readily to believe his

eyes, because, good heaven! this was not the place for bread. "Let us see what all this is," said he to himself; he went towards the column, stooped down, took up one of these things, and it was truly a little cake of bread, round and very white, of that kind which Renzo was only accustomed to eat on holidays. "Is it really bread!" he exclaimed aloud, so great was his astonishment. "Is it thus they sow this year? and in this country? and do they not even take the trouble to pick them up when they fall? This must be the country of Green Ginger!" After a journey of ten miles in the morning air, this bread, together with his astonishment, awoke his appetite. "Shall I take it?" he deliberated with himself; "pooh! they have left it here to the discretion of dogs, it is equally good that a Christian should enjoy it. After all, if the master comes I will pay him." Thus thinking, he put into one pocket the cake he had in his hand, took a second and put it into the other, a third and began to eat, pursuing his way more uncertain than ever, and desiring to understand what all this might be. Scarcely had he taken two steps, before he saw people approach from the city, and he gazed most attentively at those who first made their appearance. There were a man and a woman, and rather behind them a little boy; all three bore loads upon their backs, which seemed beyond their strength, and all three presented a strange sight. Their clothes, or rather their rags, were covered with flour, their countenances also covered with flour, distorted and inflamed, they moved along, not only bent down by the weight, but also as though they were in pain, as though their bones had been bruised.

The man carried upon his shoulders, with great difficulty, a sack of flour, which, pierced with holes here and there, sowed some of its contents on the ground each time he met with any obstacle in his way, and at each false step that he took. But still more singular was the figure of the woman; a huge fat body, which two extended arms seemed with difficulty to sustain, resembled a large earthen pot with two handles; and below this huge body issued forth two legs, naked to the knees, which came along staggering. Renzo regarded her attentively, and perceived that this huge body was formed by her petticoat which the woman held up by the hem, within which petticoat was placed as much flour as it could contain, and even rather more, so that at each step she took she was enveloped in a white cloud. The little boy supported with his hands upon his head a basket heaped up with bread, but he, having shorter legs than his parents, remained a little behind, and hastening his pace to rejoin them, the basket lost its balance, and some of the bread fell out.

“Only throw away another, good-for-nothing that thou art!” said the mother grinning at him.

“I do not throw them away, they fall of themselves. What am I to do?” he replied.

“Ah! it’s well for thee that I have my hands full,” replied the woman, agitating her fists as though she were giving the poor boy a good shaking; and by this movement, making more flour fly away than would have been enough to make the two cakes which the little boy had let fall.

“Come, come,” said the man, “let us turn back and pick them up, or some one else will get them.

We have been in want long enough. Now that we have a little abundance, let us enjoy it in holy peace."

In the meantime other people arrived from the gate, and one of them going up to the woman, asked, "where are they now going to seize bread?"

"On, on!" she replied; and then, after they had proceeded some ten paces, she added, grumbling, "these villanous peasants will come and pillage all the bakehouses and shops, and then nothing will remain for us."

"A little for each one, torment that thou art," said the husband. "Abundance! abundance!"

From this, and many other things of the same kind, which he both heard and saw, Renzo concluded that he had arrived in a city which was in a state of insurrection, and that this was a day of victory,—that is to say, a day when each one pillaged in proportion to his will and his strength, giving blows as payment. Much as we desire our poor mountaineer to make a good figure; the sincerity of an historian obliges us to say that his first sentiment was that of pleasure. He found so little to praise in the ordinary course of things, that he felt inclined to approve of anything which should alter this course. And besides, not being a man superior to the age in which he lived, he also cherished the opinion, or rather the general prejudice, that this scarcity of bread was occasioned by the dealers and bakers; and he was disposed to find any means just, which should snatch out of their hands the food which they, according to this opinion, cruelly denied to the hunger of a whole people. However, he resolved to keep out of the tumult; rejoiced in being directed to a Capuchin who would

find him an asylum, and be a father to him. Thinking thus, and regarding attentively at the same time fresh conquerors who came along loaded with booty, he soon arrived at the monastery.

In the place where now rises the beautiful palace with its high gallery was then situated, and even not many years ago might still be seen, a small square, and at the farthest side stood the church and Capuchin monastery, with four large elms growing in front. We congratulate, not without envy, all those of our readers who have not seen things in the state we describe, since they must be very young, and have not yet had time to commit many follies. Renzo went straight to the door, put into his stomach the piece of bread which yet remained uneaten, drew out and held prepared in his hand the letter, and then pulled the bell. A very small door, with a grate in it, opened, and there appeared the face of the doorkeeper who demanded who he was.

"One from the country, who brings an urgent letter for the Father Buonaventura, from the Father Cristoforo."

"Give it here," said the doorkeeper, putting his hand to the grate.

"No, no," said Renzo, "I must deliver it into his own hands."

"He is not in the monastery."

"Let me enter, and wait for him."

"Follow my advice," replied the Friar; "go and wait for him in the church, so that in the meantime you may be doing some good; you cannot for the present enter the monastery." Having said this, he again closed the little door. Renzo remained outside with

the letter in his hand. He made ten steps towards the door of the church, intending to follow the door-keeper's counsel; but then he bethought him, he would first give another glance at the tumult. He crossed the square, folded his arms, and looked towards the interior of the city, where the stir was more busy and noisy. The whirlpool drew in the spectator. "Let us go and see," said he to himself; he again drew out another morsel of bread, and devouring it, moved on towards this direction. Whilst he is thus walking along, we will relate, as briefly as possible, the causes and the beginning of these discontents.

CHAPTER XII.

THIS was the second year that the crops had been bad. The preceding year, the provisions which remained over from the former harvests had to a certain degree supplied the deficiency, and the populace had lived on until 1628, the time of our history, neither entirely satiated nor famished, but certainly entirely destitute of resources. Now this much-desired harvest was even more miserable than the preceding one,—partly owing to the seasons being still more adverse (and this not alone in the states of Milan, but also in a considerable tract of the surrounding country), partly the fault of man. The havoc and spoil of the war, of the beautiful war, which we have already mentioned, were such, that, in those parts of the state nearest the scene of action, more farms than usual remained uncultivated and abandoned by the peasantry, who instead of procuring bread by their labour, both for themselves and for others, were obliged to gain it by charity. I have said more than usual, because the insupportable taxes imposed with an unexampled greediness and stupidity, the habitual behaviour of the troops quartered in the villages even in time of peace,—behaviour which the sorrowful documents of this time compare to that of an invading enemy, and other causes which are not for us to mention, had already been long slowly producing this sad

effect in the Milanese States; the particular circumstances of which we speak, were like the sudden irritation of a chronic disease. And scarcely was the harvest got in, when the provisions for the multitude, and the waste which always accompanies them, caused such a dearth, that famine, and with it its salutary as well as inevitable concomitant, dearness of food, made itself soon felt.

But when the dearness reaches a certain point, there rises always—or at least has always risen until now; and if still this is the case at the present day, spite of the writings of so many excellent men, only think what it must have been in those times!—there rises, I say, an opinion among the multitude that this dearth is not the cause of the high price of provisions. People remember to have feared and predicted it; people imagine all at once that there is grain enough, and that the evil arises from not selling sufficient for consumption: a supposition which is entirely unfounded, but which flatters for a while their anger and their hope. The corn-dealers, real or imaginary, the possessors of estates who would not sell their corn all in one day, the bakers who bought it,—all those, in short, who had crops, little or much, or who were reported to have, were considered as the authors of the misery and the dearth; they were the object of the universal complaint—the abomination of both the well and ill-dressed multitude. They could say with certainty where were the magazines, heaped up, overflowing with grain, and crowded with sacks; they even mentioned the number of the sacks—a surprising number! they spoke with certainty of the immense quantity of grain which was secretly ex-

ported; and in other states, people probably exclaimed with equal certainty and warmth, that the corn of their country went to Milan. They implored from the magistrates those measures which always appear, or at least have always in the eye of the multitude appeared, so simple, so just, and so well adapted to bring forth the grain, which as they said lay concealed, walled-up, or buried; those measures which should cause the return of plenty. The magistrates did something; they fixed the exact price of each article, and intimated punishment to those who refused to sell, with several other things of the same kind. Yet all precaution in this world, let it be ever so efficacious, is unable to diminish the necessity for food, or to cause crops to spring up out of season; and as unfortunately those who exercised power were not possessed of any means by which to bring forth corn from those places in which there might be a superabundance, the evil still remained, and even increased. The multitude attributed this to the weakness of the remedies applied, and solicited, with loud cries, more vigorous and decisive measures. And as ill-luck would have it, they found the very man after their own heart.

In the absence of the Governor, Don Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordova, who was commanding at the siege of Casale, in Montserrat, the High-Chancellor Antonio Ferrer, also a Spaniard, supplied his place at Milan. He perceived—and who could not have perceived?—that the having bread at a just price, was in itself a very desirable thing; and he thought—and here is the absurdity—that an order from his hand would be sufficient to produce this effect. He fixed

the *meta* (this is the name given at Milan for the tariffs for food); he fixed the meta of bread at the price which would have been just, had grain then been generally sold at thirty lire the bushel, but it sold even as high as eighty. He acted like a lady who has been young, and who hopes to make herself young again by altering her certificate of baptism.

Orders, less absurd and less unjust, had, more than once, remained unexecuted, owing to the very impossibility of their execution; but the multitude, who saw their desire at length converted into law, watched over its execution, and would not have suffered that it should remain merely a joke. They ran immediately to the bakehouses to demand bread at the taxed price; and they demanded it with that air of resolution and menace which is given by passion, by strength, and by the law, when all three are united in one. If the bakers make loud outcries, do not demand the bread, said they. To mix the flour, work the dough, put into the oven, and take out again without pausing (for the people, having a confused idea that the whole thing was violent, besieged the bakehouses continually, so as to enjoy this good fortune as long as it lasted), to fatigue yourself, I say, nay, almost kill yourself, only in the end to be the loser, how great must have been the pleasure? But on one hand, the magistrates threatened punishment; on the other, the people who wished to be served urged on, and grumbled in their coarse voices, whenever a baker delayed, ever so little, menacing him with one of their acts of justice, which are among the worst of acts perpetrated in this world: there was no remedy; they were obliged to knead, to put in and take out of the oven, and to sell.

However, to insure the continuance of this occupation, it was not sufficient merely to command the bakers, neither sufficed it that the bakers should stand in great fear of this command, it was necessary that they should be able to obey; and although the state of affairs had continued only a short time longer, this they would not have been able to do. They shewed the magistrates how unjust and insupportable was this burden imposed upon them; they protested that they were willing to fling their shovels into the oven, and leave the city; in the meanwhile they dragged on, hoping and ever hoping, that sometime the Grand-Chancellor would have his eyes opened. But Antonio Ferrer, who was what would now be called a man of character, replied, that the bakers had gained a great deal by the past, and would again gain a great deal by the future, when times should again be better; that it would be seen how he, perhaps, thought of making them some compensation, and that in the meantime they should continue to carry on as well as they could. Was he really himself persuaded of these reasons which he gave; or knowing by its effect the impossibility of maintaining his edict, did he wish to leave to others the odium of revoking it? Who now can fathom the intentions of Antonio Ferrer? The fact is, that he continued steadfast to that which he had ordained. In the end, the Council of Ten (a municipal magistracy formed from the nobility, which lasted until the year 1796,) informed the Governor, by letter, of the state in which affairs were, and prayed him to discover some remedy.

Don Gonzalo, immersed in the affairs of the war, did

what the reader will readily imagine; he named a Junto, upon whom he conferred authority to fix a reasonable price upon bread, this was just towards both parties. The deputies met, or, as they said in the diplomatic jargon of that time, borrowed from the Spaniards; they assembled in Junto, and after a thousand reverences, compliments, penalties, sighs, doubts, vain propositions, and tergiversations, drew towards a determination of which they all felt the necessity, and knowing well that they played an important card, but convinced they could do no less, they raised the price of bread. The bakers breathed again, but the populace were infuriated.

The evening preceding the day of Renzo's arrival the streets and the squares had been stirring with men, who, transported by a common rage, governed by a common thought, acquaintances or strangers, had assembled in knots, without at first any common intention, almost without being aware of it themselves. Each oration increased the conviction and passion of its auditors, as well as the passion of its deliverer. Among so many impassioned men, there were, nevertheless, some who were cool and calm enough to observe with pleasure how the water continued to trouble itself; they amused themselves with troubling it still more by those arguments and stories which knaves know so well how to fabricate, and which excited minds are so prone to believe; and they proposed to themselves not to let this water repose before having caught some good fish. Thousands of men went to sleep with the confused idea that it was necessary to do something, and that something would be done. Before day the streets were again filled

with knots and little gatherings of people, children, women, men, old men, artisans, beggars,—all met by chance. Here was a confused din of a thousand voices, here some one harangued the people, whilst others applauded; this one asked his neighbour the same thing which had just been asked of him; the other repeated the exclamation which he had heard resounding in his ears; everywhere were heard lamentations, threats, cries of surprise; a very small number of words was the material of many discourses.

Nothing was wanting but an occasion, an impetus, to turn these words into deeds; and this was not long wanting. At break of day, boys were accustomed to leave the bakers' shops with baskets filled with bread, which they went to deliver at the houses of their customers. The first appearance of one of these unlucky boys in one of these knots of people was like the falling of a lighted squib into a gunpowder-mill. "Only see, if there is not bread!" cried a hundred voices at once. "Yes, for our tyrants who swim in abundance, and who wish that we should die of hunger," said one. He approached the lad, placed his hand upon the edge of the basket, drew it towards him, and said "Let me see." The little lad coloured, turned pale, trembled; wished to say, "let me go forward," but the words died in his mouth; he loosened his arms, and endeavoured to liberate himself in haste from the leathern straps. "Down with this basket," was heard from all sides. Many hands seized upon it; the basket is on the ground, the cloth which covers it is thrown into the air; a tepid fragrance diffuses itself around. "We also, are Christians; we also

ought to eat bread," said the first. He takes a loaf, lifts it on high, shews it the crowd, and bites it; hands in the basket; bread in the air; in less time than it takes to relate, the basket was emptied. Those who had got nothing, irritated at the sight of the others gain, and animated by the facility of the enterprise, move off in troops in search of other baskets; so many met—so many pillaged. However, it was no longer needful to assault those who carried them; they who unhappily found themselves in the street, saw which way the wind blew, willingly set down their burdens, and scampered off. Nevertheless, those who remained with unsatisfied stomachs were, without comparison, the most numerous; thus the conquerors themselves were not satisfied with so small a prey; and there were to be found among them those who had counted upon a much better arranged assault. "To the bakehouse!" cried they.

In the street called the Corsia de' Servi, there stood at the time of our story a bakehouse, and even at the present day there is one of the same name. This name, which in Tuscan, signifies the Bakehouse of the Crutches, is composed in Milanese of such extravagant, strange, savage words, that the alphabet of the Italian language has not characters wherewith to indicate the sound.* Here, rushed the crowd. The people of the shop were busied questioning the boy who was returned unladen, who, all out of breath and in trouble, recounted stammering his sad adventure, when suddenly they heard a sound of people in movement; the noise increases, approaches, they perceive the forerunners of the troop.

* El prestin de scanse.

“Shut up the shop! shut up the shop! quick! quick! Some one runs to demand assistance from the sheriff; the others close in haste the shop, and barricade the doors. The people begin to crowd outside, and cry, “bread! bread! open! open!”

In a few moments the sheriff arrives with a piquet of halberdiers. “Make way, make way, my children! home, home, make way for the sheriff!” cried he, with his halberdiers. The people, who at present were not very numerous, made way a little; the soldiers were enabled to draw themselves up, and post themselves before the closed shop door, somewhat pressed together, although in good order.

“But, my children!” cried the sheriff, “what are you doing here? Return home, return home! Where is then your fear of God? What will our lord the king say? We do not wish to hurt you, but return home; behave like honest men! What the devil will you do here, thus crowding one upon the other! No good either to soul or body. Home, home!” But those who saw the face of the speaker, and who heard his words, even had they wished to obey, could not, pushed about as they were, and pressed upon by those behind—as one man is hurried on by another, on, on, even to the extremity of the crowd, which still kept increasing. The sheriff began to lose his breath. “Make them give way, that I may regain my breath,” said he to the halberdiers; “but do not hurt any one. Endeavour to enter the shop; knock, make them stand back.”

“Back, back!” cried the halberdiers, throwing themselves upon the foremost ranks of the multitude, and repulsing them with the butt-end of their hal-

berds. The people gave a yell, and drew back as well as they were able, pushing their backs into the chests, their elbows in the stomachs, their heels into the feet of those behind them; there was such a press, such a crowd, that those who found themselves in the midst would have given something to have been out of it. In the meantime a small opening was made before the door; the sheriff knocked, and knocked again, shouting that they should open; the people of the house look out from the windows, they descend in haste, they open the door. The sheriff enters, he calls the halberdiers, who enter one by one, those who were last keeping back the crowd with their halberds. When they are all entered, they draw the bolt, the sheriff mounts up stairs in haste, he appears at a window. Good heavens! what a tumult!

“My children!” he cried. Many looked upward. “My children! return home. A general pardon to whomsoever returns immediately home.”

“Bread, bread! Open, open!” were the words most distinctly heard in the horrible yell by which the crowd answered him.

“Be wise, my children! Give heed! You have yet time! Go; return, return home! You shall have bread, but this is not the way to get it. Ah, ah! what are you doing down there? Ah! at this door? Oh! oh!—I see, I see. Be reasonable! Give heed! This is a great crime you are committing. I am going to descend immediately. Ah, ah! leave those irons there! down with those hands. Shame! You Milanese, who for your goodness are celebrated throughout the world! Listen, listen! You have always been good children. Ah! canaille!”

This sudden change of style was occasioned by a stone which proceeding from the hand of one of these good children, struck the sheriff's forehead. "Canaille! "canaille!" continued he, hastily closing the window and retiring. But loud as he had cried, his words, both good and bad, had vanished, and were lost in the air, in the tempest of sound which came from below. What he had referred to was a great labouring with stones and iron bars (the first which they had been enabled to procure in the street) at the door and the windows, in order to burst in the said door and tear away the bars from the windows; and already was the work far advanced.

In the meantime the masters and apprentices of the shop who were at the windows of the upper stories, armed with a provision of stones (which probably they had torn up from the paving of the court-yard), shouted to those below, and made threatening gestures, in order to deter them; they exhibited the stones, and gave the crowd to understand that these they would fling down; but soon seeing that this was only lost time, they began to hurl the stones in good earnest. Not one fell in vain; so great was the concourse that, as the saying is, not a grain of millet could have fallen to the ground.

"Ah, rogues! ah, rascals! Is this the bread you will give the poor? Ah, ah! Oh, oh! On, on!" yelled the mob. More than one was wounded,—two lads remained dead on the spot. Rage increased the strength of the multitude; the door was driven in; the iron bars from the windows were wrenched out, and the tumult penetrated through the openings thus made. Those within the house, seeing this disastrous

issue, escaped to the garrets. The sheriff and the halberdiers remained lying under the tiles; others, escaping through the skylights, wandered about the roofs like cats.

The sight of the booty made the conquerors forget their designs of sanguinary vengeance. They throw themselves upon the troughs, the bread is pillaged. Others, on the contrary, hasten to break open the lock of the counter, seize handfuls of money, pocket it, and depart, loaded with *quattrini*, to return afterwards to steal bread, should any yet remain. The crowd streams into the magazines. They seize upon the sacks of flour, they drag them along, they pour out their contents; one man holds a sack between his legs, loosens its mouth, and, to reduce it to a portable size, throws away a portion of the flour; another, crying, "wait, wait," places himself behind him, so as to receive in his apron, in his handkerchief, in his hat, this gift of God; one runs to a trough, and seizes upon a piece of dough, which lengthening itself out, escapes his grasp; another, who has possessed himself of a bolting-cloth, carries it off high in the air; they come, they go; men, women, and children, push, pull, and yell; a white dust which settles everywhere, and rises from all sides, covers and whitens every thing. Outside is a crush, formed by the two opposing processions of those who depart with the booty, and others who wish to enter with the same desire of pillage,—these dash against each other, alternately embarrassing one another.

Whilst this bakehouse was being thus devastated, not one in the whole city was quiet and out of danger. But before the others, the crowd did not assemble

sufficient to dare every thing; some shops the masters had called in assistance, and stood on the defensive; whilst some other poor bakers, less strong in numbers, or more intimidated, endeavoured to compromise matters; they distributed bread to those who began to assemble before their shops, on condition that these should take their departure. And they departed, at length, not so much because they were satisfied, with what they had gained, as because the halberdiers and officers of justice, keeping away from this terrible bakehouse of the Crutches, shewed themselves everywhere else with sufficient strength to awe these little troops of mutineers. Thus the tumults continued always increasing before the first unfortunate bakehouse; all those who longed to lay a hand to this beautiful work, hastened where the friends were the strongest, and impunity the most sure.

Things had arrived at this point, when Renzo, having, as we have said, finished eating his bread, came from the suburb of the Eastern-gate, and, without being aware of it, reached the very centre of the tumult. He walked on, now quickly, now retarded by the crowd, making good use of both his eyes and ears, so as to gain from the confused hum of voices some more positive notion of the state of things. And here are pretty nearly the words which he succeeded in overhearing during his walk.

“It is discovered now,” said one; “the infamous imposture of these rascals, who said that there was neither bread, nor flour, nor grain. Now we clearly see how the thing is, and they can no longer make us believe any such stories. Hurrah! abundance!”

“I tell you that this will help nothing,” said another;

"it is only a hole in the water; it will be worse than ever, unless they do us thorough justice. Bread will be cheap, but they will poison it, to kill the poor like so many flies. They say already there are too many of us; this has been said in the council. I know this for certain, having heard it with these ears of mine, from one of my gossips, who is the friend of a relation of one of these gentlemen's scullions."

Another foaming at the mouth, and holding with one hand a ragged handkerchief upon his thin and bloody hair, said words which are not to be repeated, and his neighbour, to console him, echoed them back.

"Make way! make way! gentlemen, I beseech. Let a poor father pass, who carries food to his five little children," said one staggering under the weight of a great sack of flour; and every one endeavoured to make way for him.

"I," said another, almost in an under-tone, to his companions, "I shall go. I am a man of the world, and I know how these things go on. These brawlers who now make such an uproar, to-morrow, or soon after, will keep in their houses, all trembling with fear. I have already perceived certain faces, certain gentlemen, who are skulking about spying out the land; and they note well, who is, and who is not here. When all is ended, they will make up their accounts, and every one will have his bill."

"The one who protects the bakers," said a sonorous voice, which attracted Renzo's attention, "is the Superintendent of provisions."

"They are all villains," cried another.

"Yes, but he is the chief of them," replied the first speaker.

The Superintendent of provisions, elected every year by the Governor from among six nobles proposed by the Council of Ten, was the president of this council and of this tribunal of provisions; the tribunal had several duties, but principally the one of providing corn and provisions. The one occupying such a post must necessarily in times of famine and of ignorance be considered as the author of these evils; unless he acted differently to Ferrer, but even had such been his intention, it would not have been in his power.

"The villains!" exclaimed another, "could they have done anything worse? They have even gone so far as to say that the High-Chancellor was an old man in his dotage, so as to discredit him, and get the command to themselves. One ought to make a large coop and put them in, to live on dry peas and cockle-weed, as they would have treated us."

"Is it bread?" said one, who sought to pass on in haste," blows from stones of a pound weight—stones of such a size, which came down like hail! And what bruised ribs I have! I do not see how I am to get home!"

In the midst of such discourses, from which it would be difficult to say whether he gained most information or most terror, and in the midst of blows, Renzo arrived at length before this bakehouse. The populace had already begun to disperse themselves, so that he could contemplate this sad ruin; the walls dilapidated and bruised from the blows of stones and

bricks, the windows torn from their frames, the door broken.

This, however, is no beautiful thing, thought Renzo to himself. If they treated all bakehouses after this manner, where will they make bread? In the wells?

From time to time some one would issue forth from the shop carrying a piece of a trough, or of a sieve, a bench, a basket, a ledger, some thing, in short, from this poor bakehouse, and crying, "Make way! make way!" passed on through the crowd. All these people took the same direction, and stopped at a place agreed upon by all. What is this other affair? thought Renzo to himself, and he placed himself behind one of these individuals, who having made a bundle of broken boards and chips of wood, placed it upon his shoulders, and went on like the others through the street which runs along the northern side of the cathedral, and which takes its name from the flight of steps* which used to be there, but which, since a short time, is there no longer.

The desire of seeing what was about to happen, could not, however, prevent our mountaineer, now arrived before this grand pile of building, from stopping for a moment to gaze upwards, open-mouthed. He redoubled his pace to rejoin the one whom he had chosen as his guide. He turned the corner, casting another glance at the façade of the cathedral, the greater part of which was still in the rough, and very far from being completed, keeping constantly behind the one who directed his steps towards the

* The street of the *scalini* (steps).

middle of the square. The farther one advanced the denser became the crowd, but all made way for the bearer of the wood. He passed through the mob, and Renzo, insinuating himself into the opening which he made, arrived with him at the centre of the crowd. Here was a large open space, and in the midst a bonfire, a heap of embers, relics of the utensils mentioned above. All around was a clapping of hands, a stamping of feet, a din of a thousand cries of triumph, and of a thousand imprecations.

The man of the bundle flung it upon the embers; another, with a piece of a half-consumed shovel, stirred up the fire; the flame raises and condenses itself, the flame ascends, and with it the cries arise still stronger: "Hurrah! abundance! Death to the tyrants! Perish the famine! Perish the tribunal! Perish the council! Abundance! Hurrah! Bread! Hurrah!"

Certainly, the destruction of the bolters and the troughs, the pillaging of the bakehouses, the ruining and terrifying the bakers, are not the most efficacious means of causing an abundance of bread; but this is one of those metaphysical niceties which do not strike the mind of the multitude. However, without being a very great metaphysician, Renzo, who did not partake in the general delirium, made this reflection. He kept it prudently to himself, however, because among so many countenances there was not one which did not seem to say, "Brother, if I am wrong thou canst try to correct me, but thou shalt pay dearly for it."

The flame was again extinguished; no one was seen to arrive with other combustibles, and the troop were

beginning to grow weary, when the report spread that at the Cordusio (a small square or street not far distant), they were laying siege to another bakehouse. In circumstances like this, the mere announcement of a fact is often sufficient to occasion it in reality. Together with this report a desire diffused itself through the crowd to hasten to the scene of action. "I am going there; art thou going?—Come. Let us go," was heard on all sides; the mob moved off and formed a procession. Renzo remained behind without stirring, except when hurried along by this torrent, and held counsel with himself whether he should extricate himself from this rabble-rout, and return to the convent in search of Father Bonaventura, or go on and see what yet remained to be seen. Curiosity again prevailed. However, he resolved not to get mixed up with the fray, not to get his bones broken, or even risk something still more; but to keep himself at some distance and be a mere spectator. This resolution taken, and already finding himself somewhat at liberty, he drew forth his second little loaf, and having bitten it, commenced his march with this tumultuous army.

The multitude having left the square, had entered the narrow and straight street, the Pescheria-Vecchia, and from thence reached the square de Mercanti. There were few who, passing the niche in the gallery of the edifice, then called the College of Doctors, did not cast a glance towards the grand statue which occupied it, towards the serious, haughty, ferocious countenance of Don Philip the Second, who, even in marble, imposed a sentiment of respect; and who, stretching forth his arm, seemed to say, "I am here, scum of the earth."

This statue is no longer there, owing to a singular circumstance. A hundred and sixty years after the events of our story, his head was, one morning removed, his sceptre taken from his hand, a dagger substituted in its stead, and to the statue was given the name of Marcus Brutus. Thus metamorphised, it remained standing a few years, when another morning, certain individuals who had not much sympathy with Marcus Brutus, who even must have had a secret hatred against him, threw a cord round the statue and dragged it down, insulting it in a hundred ways; and thus mutilated and reduced to a shapeless trunk, they drew it through the streets with yells and wild gestures, and when they were thoroughly wearied they cast it I know not where. Who could have foretold this to Adrea Biffi when he sculptured it?

From this square de' Mercanti, the noisy rabble rushed through the street de Fustagnai, and thus arrived at the Cordusio. Every one on entering the square, immediately glanced towards the bakehouse which had been indicated. But instead of the crowd of friends which they expected to find there already at work, they saw only a few who stood there undecided, at some distance from the shop which was closed, and at the windows appeared armed men ready to defend the house. At this sight some were amazed, some laughed, some turned back to inform those who were arriving every moment; some stood still, some wished to return, some cried, "On, on!" There was a running about, a holding of people back, a pause, an uncertainty, a confused murmur of debate and consultation. In the midst of this confusion an ill-starred

voice cried out, "The house of the Superintendent is near here! Let us do ourselves justice! Let us pilage it!" This seemed rather the recollection of a resolution already formed, than the receiving of a new proposal. "To the Superintendent's! to the Superintendent's!" was the only cry to be heard, and the crowd rushed on towards the street, where the house thus unfortunately mentioned stood.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE unfortunate Superintendent was digesting a dinner, eaten without an appetite, and without fresh bread; he awaited in great suspense the termination of this hurricane; far, however, from imagining that it would burst thus terribly over his head. A gentleman hastened on before the crowd to inform him of the peril which he saw in staying in this house. The domestics attracted to the door by the voice, looked affrighted down the street towards the quarter from whence the noise proceeded. Whilst he listened to this advice, he perceived the vanguard arrive; in haste and in terror the domestics hasten to inform their master; and now, whilst the master thinks about flight and how he shall escape, another arrives to tell him that for this there is no longer time. The domestics were scarcely able to close the door. They put up the bars; they barricade it well; they run to close the windows, as people do when the heaven is overcast, and they expect every moment a hail-storm. The increasing yell sounds like thunder echoing in the empty court-yard, every corner of the house resounds with it; and in the midst of this vast and deafening noise are heard loud and heavy blows of stones thrown against the door.

“The Superintendent! The tyrant! The author of the famine! We will have him, alive or dead!”

The unfortunate man rushed from chamber to chamber, pale, breathless, clasping his hands, recommending himself to God, conjuring his domestics to stand firm, and to discover for him some means of escape. But how and where? He ascends to the garret; through a skylight, from whence he cannot be seen, he gazes anxiously down into the street; he sees it filled with madmen, he hears the voices which demand his death; and, more terrified than ever, he retires to seek a more secure and secret hiding-place. Here he lurks, he listens, he listens again, with agony, whether this terrible uproar calm itself, whether this tumult grow somewhat quieter; but, on the contrary, hearing the roar arise more loud and fierce than ever, and the blows increase, he hastily covers his ears with his hands. Then, as though out of himself, setting his teeth together and contracting his countenance, he stretches out his arms and presses wildly with his hands against the door, as though he would hold it firm. What exactly happened afterwards cannot be known, as he was by himself; this our history can only divine.

Renzo found himself in the thickest of the fray; he had not been carried there by the torrent, he had run there. At this first proposal to spill blood, he had felt his blood all on fire. As to the plundering, he had not been quite sure whether this were good or bad, under the present circumstances; but the idea of homicide caused him to feel a sudden and intense horror. And, although owing to the terrible facility which lively imaginations possess of believing every thing, he was persuaded by the impassioned words of so many people, that the Superintendent was the

principal cause of the famine and the enemy of the poor; yet, having heard by chance in the commencement of the attack some words which indicated the desire of making some attempt to save him, he had suddenly proposed to himself to assist such a work, and with this intention he had arrived near the door which was attacked in a hundred ways. Some with stones knocked upon the nails which held the lock, so as to break it; others, with chissels and hammers, endeavoured to work more methodically; others, even with stones, with blunted knives, with nails, with sticks, nay, having nothing but their finger-nails, broke the walls and tore off the plaster, and tried to raise the bricks and make a breach. Those who could not assist the work itself inspired courage by their cries; yet at the same time, by their pressing round, they interrupted the work still more, already interrupted as it was by the disorderly emulation of the labourers: for, by the grace of heaven, it happens sometimes, in evil as well as in good, that the most ardent assistants become an impediment.

The magistrates who were the earliest informed of what had happened, sent immediately to demand succour from the commandant of the castle, then called after the gate Giovia—he sent some soldiers; but what between the giving of the information and the orders, the assembling themselves and putting themselves in march, and the time required to make the journey, the house was already encompassed by the besiegers, and the soldiers were obliged to remain at a distance, at the outskirts of the crowd. The commanding officer knew not what course to pursue. Here was nothing but an assemblage of people, of all ages and

of both sexes, which had nothing to do but to stand and look on. To the orders given to make way and separate themselves, they returned only a dull and protracted murmur; no one moved. To fire upon the mob appeared to the officer not only a cruel but also a dangerous thing—a thing, which offending the least terrible party, would have irritated the more violent; and then, besides, he had received no such order. To break through the first crowd, disperse it right and left, and carry war to those who were waging war, would have been the best; but how to succeed thus far?—There was the point. Who knows whether the soldiers would have been able to advance united and in good order; and whether, instead of breaking through the crowd, they would not have found themselves dispersed among the mob, and left to its discretion, after having irritated it? The irresolution of the commander and the immobility of the soldiery were regarded, either with or without reason, as occasioned by fear. The people who surrounded the soldiers contented themselves with gazing into their faces with an expression which said, “I laugh at you;” those who stood somewhat farther off did not even content themselves with provoking them alone by gestures and with cries of scorn; nay, there were but few who knew of their presence, or troubled themselves about them; the besiegers continued their work of demolition without any other thought than that of speedily succeeding in their enterprise; the spectators did not cease to animate them by their cries.

There was seen among the rabble, a spectacle in himself, an ill-looking old man, who, opening two

sunken and flaming eyes, contracting his wrinkles into a smile of diabolical pleasure, raised with his two hands above his dishonoured grey hairs, and agitated in the air, a hammer, a cord, and four large nails, with which, as he said, he would crucify the Superintendent upon his own door, as soon as he should have given up the ghost.

“Shame, shame!” escaped from Renzo’s lips, who was seized with horror at these words, and at the sight of so many other countenances which seemed to give an approving sign, and encouraged also, perhaps, by some others upon which, although silently, there depicted itself the same horror with which he himself was seized. “Shame! shall we take upon ourselves the executioner’s office? Assassinate a Christian? How will you that God should give us bread, if we commit such crimes? He will send us his thunders, and not bread!”

“Ah, dog! Ah, traitor to his country!” cried, turning round to Renzo, one of those who in the midst of the tumult had heard these holy words. “Wait, wait! It is one of the Superintendent’s domestics disguised as a peasant; it is a spy! Fall upon him! fall upon him!” burst forth a hundred voices around him. “What is he? Where is he? Who is he? A servant of the Superintendent’s. A spy. The Superintendent himself, who disguised as a peasant, is escaping. Where is he? Where is he? Upon him! Upon him!”

Renzo remained silent; he drew himself together and made himself very small; he wished to disappear. Some of his neighbours aided our hero in concealing himself; they send forth loud cries; they endeavour to stifle and confound these hostile and blood-thirsty

voices. But what assisted him more than all the rest was the cry of "Make way! make way!" which resounded near him. "Make way! Here is our succour! Make way, oh!"

What was this then? It was a long ladder which some people were carrying towards the house in order to enter by the window. But happily this means, which would have rendered the thing so easy, was not easily to be put in operation. Those who bore it at the ends, and here and there on each side of the machine, knocked about and separated by the crowd, staggered at every step; one with his head imprisoned between two staves of the ladder, the two supports resting upon his shoulders, as though under a moving yoke, sent forth miserable groans; another was separated from his burden by a blow; and the ladder fell upon shoulders, arms, and ribs; and only think, good reader, what must have been the cries of the victims! Others raised it again, placed themselves underneath, and laid it upon their shoulders, crying, "Come, let us on!" The fatal machine proceeded along, leaping and winding. It arrived in time to divert the attention of Renzo's enemies; he profited by this confusion risen out of confusion. He at first concealed himself; then, plying his elbows as much as he could, he withdrew from this spot where the air was no longer wholesome for him, with the intention of escaping as quickly as possible out of the tumult, and of really going to find or to wait for the Father Bonaventura.

Suddenly an extraordinary movement commenced at one extremity, and spread through the crowd; a voice is heard, and is repeated, from mouth to mouth, the name of "Ferrer! Ferrer!" An astonishment,

a joy, a madness, an inclination, a repugnance, arises wherever this name arrives; some shout the name, some wish to stifle it; some affirm, some deny; some bless, some curse.

“Ferrer is here!—It is not true, it is not true!—Yes, yes! Long live Ferrer! Ferrer who gives us cheap bread!—No, no!—He is here; he is here in his carriage.—What does that matter? What has he to do with this? We will have no one!—Ferrer! Long live Ferrer!—the friend of the poor! He comes to conduct the Superintendent to prison!—No, no; we will execute justice ourselves; back, back!—Yes, yes: Ferrer! Let Ferrer come! Throw the Superintendent into prison!”

And all, standing on tip-toe, turned their gaze towards that side from whence was announced this unexpected arrival. But by all standing on tip-toe, they saw neither more nor less than if they had remained with their feet flat on the ground; but so it was, they all raised themselves on their toes.

In fact, at the outskirts of the crowd, on the opposite side to where the soldiers stood, Antonio Ferrer, the High-Chancellor, had arrived in his carriage; he, his conscience probably tormenting him for having by his propositions and obstinacy been the cause, or at least, the occasion of this uproar, was now come endeavouring to appease, or at least to prevent, its most terrible and irreparable consequences; he was come to spend worthily an ill-acquired popularity.

In all popular tumults there is always a certain number of men who, either through the violence of their passions, through a fanatical persuasion, or through a criminal design, or an infernal love of destruction,

do all that lies in their power to drive things to the most fearful extremity. They propose or support the most barbarous projects; they stir the fire each time it commences to languish; nothing is ever too violent for them;—they desire that the tumult should have neither end, nor limit. But, as counterpoise, there is also always a certain number who apply themselves, perhaps with the same ardour and the same obstinacy, to obtain the contrary effect: some are influenced by friendship or partiality for the persons menaced; others, without any other impulse than a pious and spontaneous horror of bloodshed and atrocious deeds. May heaven bless them! In each of these opposing parties, although at first there are never any concerted measures, the uniformity of their wishes creates an instantaneous harmony in their operations. Thus what composes the mass, and even the material of the tumult, is an accidental mingling of men who, more or less, by indefinite gradations, hold to one or the other extreme; somewhat hot-headed, somewhat of rogues, somewhat inclined towards a certain species of that justice which they can comprehend, desirous of seeing some grand example of this same justice; disposed to ferocity, to compassion, to adoration, or execration, according as the occasion presents itself for experiencing either one or the other of these sentiments in its fullest extent; every moment eager to know, to believe something extraordinary; feeling the necessity of shouting, of applauding, or of yelling against some one. Let him live! let him die! are the words which they pronounce most willingly; and if any one has succeeded in convincing them that such a one does not deserve to be hanged, drawn,

and quartered, it is not needful to expend many more words to convince them that he is worthy to be borne in triumph; they are actors, spectators, tools, obstacles, according to the way the wind blows; they are ready to remain silent when they no longer hear a cry to repeat, ready to desist when the instigators are wanting, ready to disband when, without one dissenting voice, the cry is, "Let us depart!" Ready to return to their homes, demanding one from the other "What is all this, then?" Always, in circumstances of this kind, the mass having the greatest power, because the mass is in itself the power, each of the two active parties employs all its ability to win the mass over to its side, to render itself master of the popular mind. These two parties are like two hostile souls which struggle to enter into this vast body and put it in motion.

It is for them to strive who can best circulate reports the most calculated to excite the passions, to direct the movements of the populace in favour of either one or other of the parties; it is for them to discover news the most likely to call forth their indignation or appease it, to awaken their hopes or their fears; for them to know where to find that shout which repeated from mouth to mouth, expresses, affirms, and creates at the same time the wish of the greater number for either one side or the other. All this gossip has merely been to preface the fact, that, in the combat of these two parties assembled before the Superintendent's house, the appearance of Antonio Ferrer gave immediately a decided advantage to the more moderate party, who were visibly the losing party. If this succour had arrived but a very little later, this party

would neither have had the strength nor a motive to combat for. This man was agreeable to the multitude on account of the tariff of his own invention, which was so favourable to purchasers, and on account also of his heroic resistance to all the arguments brought forward by the opposing party. The minds of those already favourably prepossessed were still more influenced by the courageous confidence of this old man, who, without guards, and without display, was thus come to meet and expose himself to an irritated and stormy populace. Thus, the hearing that he was come to carry the Superintendent off to prison produced an admirable effect. The fury against this unfortunate man would have arisen with twofold violence had he come to oppose it, had he conceded nothing; but with this promise of satisfaction, or as they say in the Milanese, "with this bone in the mouth," their fury somewhat calmed itself, and gave way to the sentiments of an opposite nature, which sprang up in the hearts of a considerable number.

The partisans of peace, having recovered breath, seconded Ferrer in a hundred ways: those who were near him, exciting by their applause the applause of the people, and endeavouring at the same time to induce the crowd to stand back and open a way for the carriage; others, in applauding, repeating, and circulating his words, or those which appeared to them the best which he could possibly have said,—in imposing silence upon the furious and obstinate,—and in turning against them the new passion of this fickle assembly. "Who is there who desires we should not shout—live Ferrer! Thou dost not then wish that bread should be cheap? These are the villains who do not desire

an act of Christian justice; and there are among them those who bawl louder than the others to save the Superintendent. Throw the Superintendent in prison! Long live Ferrer! Make way for Ferrer!" The number of those who spoke thus, continued to increase; the numbers of the opposite party were on the decrease; so that the one party, excited by the sermon, threw themselves upon those who were still busied with their work of demolition, ill-used them, and tore their tools out of their hands. The latter, fuming with rage and menacing, sought to revive their interest; but the cause of blood was lost: the cry which now predominated was, "Prison! Justice! Ferrer!" After a short struggle these were vanquished; the others made themselves masters of the door, in order to defend it from fresh assault, and to prepare an entrance for Ferrer. One of them shouting to the people of the house through the wall, fissures were not wanting, informed them that he was come with succour, and that the Superintendent should hold himself in readiness, "to go immediately —— to prison. Do you understand?"

"Is this the Ferrer who helped to make the edicts?" demanded our Renzo of one of his new neighbours, remembering the *vidit* Ferrer which the Doctor had shouted into his ear, and shewn him at the bottom of a certain famous edict.

"Precisely so, the High-Chancellor,"—was the reply.

"He is a brave gentleman, is he not?"

"He is more than a brave gentleman! It is he who has lowered the price of bread; the others did not wish it; and now he is come to fetch the Super-

intendent to carry him to prison, because he has not acted justly."

It is not needful to say that Renzo was for Ferrer. He wished to go straightway to meet him; the thing was not easy; but by certain kicks of his feet, and blows with his elbows, wherein he exercised his mountaineer's strength, he succeeded in making way for himself, and arrived in the first rank, beside the carriage.

The carriage had already just entered the crowd; and at this moment was stopped by one of those obstacles so inevitable and so frequent in a progress of this description. The old High-Chancellor presented first at one window of his coach, and then at the other, a countenance, all humility, all smiles, all amiability—a countenance which he had always held in reserve for the day when he should find himself in the presence of Don Philip IV., but which he was constrained to employ on this occasion. He spoke also, but the noise and hum of so many voices, the vivats, even which were shouted in his honour, allowed but a few of his words to be heard by a very few. He then aided himself by gestures, now placing the tip of his fingers upon his lips to receive a kiss, which his hands immediately distributed to the right and the left, in acknowledgment of the benevolence of the public; now, he stretched forth his hand from the carriage window and moved slowly; as to beseech the people to make way; now, he lowered it gracefully, as requesting a moment's silence. When he had obtained this, those nearest to him heard and repeated his words,—"bread, abundance. I come to execute justice; make way a little, if you please." At length,

however, as though overpowered by the hum of so many voices, by the sight of so many wild countenances, and so many eyes fixed upon him, he drew himself back for a moment, swelled out his cheeks, sending forth a great breath, and said to himself;—*Por mi vida, que de gente!*”*

“Live, Ferrer! Do not be afraid! He is a gentleman. Bread! bread!”

“Yes, bread, bread!” replied Ferrer. “Abundance, I promise you,” and he placed his hand upon his breast.

“A little space,” he added immediately. “I am to conduct him to prison, to inflict upon him the just chastisement which he merits;” and he added in an under tone—“*Si es culpable!*”† Then, bending forward towards his coachman, he said hastily, “*Adelante, Pedro, si puedes.*”‡

The coachman also smiled upon the multitude with an affectionate politeness, as though he also were some great personage; and with an ineffable grace he agitated his whip very slowly to the right and the left, beseeching his inconvenient neighbours to press themselves together, and retire a little. “A little space, if you please, gentlemen,” said he also, “a very little; as little as possible, only just enough to let us pass.”

Meanwhile, the most active of the benevolent party occupied themselves in causing that way to be made, which was requested with so much politeness. Some going before the horses made the people retire by certain sweet words, by placing their hands upon

* Upon my life, what a number of people!

† If he is guilty.

‡ On, Pedro, if thou canst.

their chests, by gently pushing them: "There, there, make way a little, gentlemen." Others were busied in the same manner on each side of the carriage, in order that it should pass on without bruising their feet or crushing the countenances of the multitude; an accident which, besides the immediate evil which could have resulted, would have fearfully risked the popularity of Antonio Ferrer.

Renzo, who had regarded this interesting old man some moments, disturbed by vexation, tormented by fatigue, yet, at the same time, animated by solicitude, which so to say was embellished by the hope of delivering a human being from this mortal agony—Renzo, I say, laid aside all thoughts of departure, and resolved to assist Ferrer, and not to abandon him until he had obtained his object. No sooner said than done; he placed himself with the others who busied themselves in causing the crowd to make way, and he was certainly not one of the least active. The opening was made. "Only advance," said more than one to the coachman, drawing back, or hastening forward to make way further on. "*Adelante presto, con juicio*," * said the master also; and the carriage put itself in motion.

In the midst of the salutations which he lavished promiscuously upon the populace, he had addressed also certain other thanks accompanied by a smile of intelligence to those whom he saw employed for him; more than one of these smiles were bestowed upon Renzo, who, in truth, well merited them, for he, this day, served the High-Chancellor better than the most intrepid of his secretaries could have done. To the

* On quickly, with precaution.

young mountaineer, on fire with this charming politeness, it appeared as though he had thus formed a friendship with Antonio Ferrer.

The carriage, once put in motion, continued its course with more or less slowness, and not without pausing from time to time. The distance was not more than a musket-shot; but, to judge from the time employed in making it, it would have seemed a little journey, even to those who were not inspired with the holy haste of Ferrer. The people moved, before and behind, on the right hand and on the left, like billows on either side a vessel which drives into the tempest. More piercing, more discordant, more deafening, than a tempest, was the present uproar. Ferrer, gazing now on this side, now on the other; moving and gesticulating, sought to hear something upon which to frame a suitable reply; he wished to hold a dialogue with this little troop of friends, but it was a difficult, perhaps the most difficult, thing he had yet encountered in all the long years of his High-Chancellorship. From time to time, however, some word, some phrase repeated by the assembly during his progress, made itself heard, as the explosion of a squib will often rise above the deafening crush of fireworks. And he, endeavouring to answer these shouts in a satisfactory manner, now shouting himself with all the strength of his lungs those words which he knew would be the best received, or which some sudden necessity seemed to demand, addressed the people, as he traversed the street, in words such as these: "Yes, gentlemen; bread; abundance. I myself will conduct him to prison; he shall be chastised — *si es culpabile*. Yes, yes; I will command;

cheap bread. *Así es* — it is so, I would say. The king, our lord and master, does not wish that his faithful subjects should suffer famine. *Ox, ox! guardaos;** Take care, that they do not hurt you, gentlemen. *Pedro, adelante con juicio.†* Abundance, abundance! make way a little, for charity. Bread! bread! In prison! in prison! What is this?" he demanded of a man who had already protruded more than half his body through the coach-window, to shout to the old man, a counsel, a prayer, a commendation, or whatsoever it might be. But he, without being able to hear the "what is this?" had been roughly drawn back by another who saw him in danger of being crushed under the wheels. Thus, in the midst of these questions and answers, these incessant acclamations, surrounded by the murmurs of opposition, which here and there made themselves heard, but which were speedily stifled, Ferrer, at length, arrived at the house, owing, however, his success principally to the assistance of his good auxiliaries.

Those of the mob who, as we have already said, were stationed here with the same good intention, had, in the meantime, busied themselves in clearing and reclearing a little space. They prayed, they exhorted, they threatened; they pushed, they pressed, they trampled with their feet, on this side and on that, with the redoubled ardour and strength which the approach of a desired end always calls forth; and they had at length succeeded in dividing the mob into two crowds, and in pressing back the two divisions, so that between the carriage and the door, before which it had stopped, there was a little free space. Renzo, who, acting as scout and guide, had

* Oh, oh! take care! † Pedro, proceed with caution.

arrived with the carriage, was able to find place in in one of the two ranks of these good people, who formed, at the same time, a protection for the carriage and two banks to keep within bounds these two overpowering waves of the populace. And, assisting to keep back one of these waves with his powerful shoulders, he found himself very well placed to see every thing.

Ferrer drew a long breath when he saw the small opening which was cleared, and that the door was yet closed. It would be better to say, not yet opened; for the hinges were unnailed from the door-posts, the panels shivered, bruised, forced in and broken in the middle, allowing a piece of a bolt to be seen through a large aperture, which twisted, loosened, and almost torn out of its socket, still, however, held all together. One of these good men had placed himself at this opening, and shouted that they should open the door; another ran to open the carriage-door; the old man put out his head, rose, and supporting himself with his right hand upon this excellent fellow's arm, he issued forth and placed his foot upon the step.

The crowd, on all sides, stood on tip-toe to see; there are a thousand faces, a thousand beards, raised in the air; the general curiosity and attention create a moment of general silence. Ferrer, resting a moment upon the step, casts a glance around him, salutes with an inclination of his body the multitude, as though from a pulpit, places his left hand upon his breast, and cries, "Bread and justice!" and then, bold, upright, and clothed in his robe, he descends midst the acclamations which mount to heaven.

Meanwhile those within had opened the door, or rather had completed the opening, by drawing away the bolt, together with the rings, already unnailed; and widening the aperture only just enough, however, to allow this desired guest to enter. "Quick, quick!" said he, "open wide, so that I can enter, and you, like brave fellows, keep back the people; and let none follow me—for the love of heaven! Open a way for us presently. Eh! eh! gentlemen, a moment," he said, at length, to those within, "gently with this door, allow me to pass; ah! my ribs; I beg you to be careful of my ribs. Now close it again; no, eh! eh! my robe! my robe!" It would, in fact, have remained shut in between the door and the door-post had he not with much dexterity drawn in his train after him,—it disappeared like the tail of a serpent which hides itself in its hole.

The door, closed again as well as it could be, was again propped up. Outside, those who had constituted themselves Ferrer's body-guard laboured with their shoulders, their arms, and their cries, to maintain the space clear, praying in the bottom of their hearts that he would make haste.

"Quick! quick!" exclaimed Ferrer, also within, to the domestics, who crowded round him, crying, "Blessings be upon you! Ah, your Excellence! Oh, your Excellence! Praised be your Excellence!"

"Quick! quick!" replied Ferrer, "where is this blessed man?"

The Superintendent descended the stairs, half dragged, half carried by his other servants, pale as death. When he saw his saviour, he drew a long breath, his pulse began again to beat, a little life

flowed into his legs, a little colour into his cheeks, and he ran as well as he could towards Ferrer, saying, "I am in the hands of God, and of your Excellency. But how to escape from here? On all sides are people who desire my death!"

"*Venga usted con migo,** and take courage; outside is my carriage, quick, quick!" He seized him by the hand, and conducted him towards the door, encouraging him all the time, but saying to himself, "*Aquí esta el busilis: Dios nos valga!*" †

The door opened: Ferrer issued forth the first; the other followed behind, shrinking together, and clinging fast to this toga of deliverance, as a child does to its mother's petticoat. Those who had maintained the space clear now raised their hands and waved their hats, and made, in fact, a species of veil—a cloud so as to screen the Superintendent from the dangerous gaze of the multitude: the unfortunate man entered the carriage the first, and there concealed himself in one of the corners. Ferrer then mounted, and the door was shut. The multitude sees something confusedly, knows what has taken place, and yells forth a torrent of applause and imprecation.

The portion of the journey yet to be made might appear the most difficult and the most dangerous. But the desire of the people that the Superintendent should be conducted to prison had sufficiently manifested itself; and whilst the carriage had been waiting, many of those who had favoured Ferrer's arrival, had occupied themselves in keeping open the passage through the crowd; the carriage upon its return

* Come with me.

† Here is the difficult point: God preserve us!

could thus proceed faster and continuously. Gradually, as it advanced, the two crowds, ranged along the narrow passage, mingled together and united behind.

Ferrer, scarcely seated, had bent forward to advise the Superintendent to keep himself concealed as far back in the carriage as possible, and not to shew himself for the love of heaven; but this piece of advice was needless. The High-Chancellor, on the contrary, was obliged to exhibit himself, so as to occupy and draw upon himself all the public attention. During this journey, as well as during the former one, he held, with his fickle auditory, a discourse, the most continuous as far as time was concerned, and yet the most disconnected with regard to sense, which ever was heard; he interrupted it, however, every now and then, by some Spanish words which he turned round to whisper into his companion's ear. "Yes, gentlemen; bread and justice; in the castle, in the prison, under my custody.—Thanks, thanks, many thanks.—No, no, he shall not escape!—*Por ablandarlos.**—It is too just. He shall be examined; it shall be seen that I myself wish you well, gentlemen.—A severe chastisement.—*Esto lo digo por su bien.†* A just tariff, an honest tariff, and punishment for those who will starve the people.—Retire a little, if you please.—Yes, yes, I am a gentleman, a friend to the people.—He shall be punished; it is true, he is a villain, a rogue.—*Pardone, usted.‡* He will pass a miserable quarter of an hour—he will pass a miserable quarter of an hour—*si es culpable.§* Yes, yes, we will make the bakers keep to a straight path.—

* It is to coax them.

† I say that for your good.

‡ Pardon me.

§ If he is guilty.

Long live the King, and the good Milanese, his faithful vassals!—He is badly off—he is badly off.—*Animo; estamos ya quasi fuera.*” *

They had, in fact, passed through the greater crowd, and were already on the point of issuing forth and pursuing their way in peace. There, whilst Ferrer commenced reposing his lungs, he perceived this succour from Pisa; these Spanish soldiers, who, however, towards the end, had not been totally useless, because, supported and directed by some citizens, they had co-operated in keeping the people quiet, and in preserving the way clear at the farther extremity. On the arrival of the carriage, they drew themselves up in line, and presented arms to the High-Chancellor, who returned also a salutation to the right and to the left; and to the officer who came nearer to present his salutation, he said, accompanying the words with a movement of the right hand, “*Beso a usted las manos;*” † words, which the officer understood as they were really meant; that is,—you have afforded me a fine assistance! In reply, he made another sign, and shrugged his shoulders. This was really the opportunity to say, *Cedant arma togæ*; but Ferrer, at this moment, had not his head running upon quotations; and, besides, it would have been throwing away words, for the officer did not understand Latin.

Pedro, passing between these two files of muskets thus respectfully raised, felt his old courage return. He recovered immediately from his confusion; he recalled who he was, and whom he was driving, and

* Courage, we are almost already out of the danger.

† I kiss your hands.

cried, "Ohe! ohe!" without adding any other ceremonious words, for the people were now scattered thinly enough to be thus treated with impunity, he whipped his horses and made them take the road towards the castle.

"*Levántese, levántese; estamos ya fuera,*"* said Ferrer to the Superintendent, who, assured by the cessation of cries, and by the rapid movement of the carriage, and by these words, drew himself out of his corner, rose, and recovering his voice, began returning thanks without end to his liberator. The latter, after having condoled with him in danger, and rejoiced with him in his salvation, exclaimed, striking his smooth head, "Ah! *que dirà de esto su Excelencia,*† who is already almost mad with this cursed Casale which will not surrender? *Que dirà el conde Duque,*‡ who is alarmed if a leaf makes more noise than usual? *Que dirà el rey nuestro señor,*§ who will not fail to learn something regarding an uproar such as this? And, even now, will this be at an end? *Dios lo sabe.*"||

"Ah, for myself, I desire to meddle no more in it!" said the Superintendent. "I wash my hands of it. I resign my post into your Excellency's hands, and shall go and live in a cave upon a mountain, a hermit, far away from these ferocious people."

"*Usted,*¶ you will do what is most proper *por el servicio de su Magestad,*"** replied the High-Chancellor, gravely.

* Rise, rise, we are here out of danger!

† What will his Excellence say to this?

‡ What will the Count-Duke say?

§ What will the King our master say?

|| God knows.

¶ You.

** For the service of his Majesty.

“His Majesty will not desire my death,” replied the Superintendent; “in a cave, in a cave, far, far from these people.”

Our author does not tell us what became of his proposition, for, after having accompanied the poor man to the castle, he no longer makes mention of his affairs.

END OF VOLUME I.

LONDON:

Printed by Manning and Mason, Ivy Lane, St. Paul's.

THE
BETROTHED LOVERS.
ETC. ETC.

THE
BETROTHED LOVERS:

a
Milanese Story of the Seventeenth Century.

WITH
THE COLUMN OF INFAMY.

BY
ALESSANDRO MANZONI.

IN THREE VOLUMES.—VOL. II.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1845.

LONDON :
Printed by Manning and Mason, Ivy-lane, Paternoster-row.

THE BETROTHED.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE crowd which remained behind began to disperse, and to withdraw to the right and to the left, by this and by that street. Some returned home to look to their affairs; some departed to breathe at large after having passed so many hours in this terrible crush; some in search of friends, with whom to chat over the events of the day. The same scene took place at the other end of the square, where now the people were so thinly scattered that the detachment of Spanish soldiers was able, without meeting any resistance, to approach and post itself before the Superintendent's house. Near to this house remained yet assembled, the dregs, so to say, of the tumult; a band of scoundrels, who, discontented with so cold and therefore so unsatisfactory an ending of so grand and brilliant a commencement, murmured, cursed, held counsel whether anything might yet be attempted; and, in order to essay this, commenced assaulting and shaking this poor door which had again been barricaded as well as might be. On the arrival of the detachment, all these people, with an unanimous

resolve and without stopping to consult, moved off in the opposite direction, leaving the field clear to the soldiers, who immediately took possession of it, and posted themselves there to guard the house and the street. But through all the neighbouring streets were scattered groups of people; wherever two or three individuals stopped, there stopped also three, four, twenty others; here some one would detach himself, there a whole knot of people would move away together, like those little clouds which sometimes after a tempest float through the azure of heaven, and say to those who gaze upwards, "the weather is not yet settled." Only imagine, then, what a chattering of tongues there must have been! One narrated with emphasis the particular events which he himself had witnessed; another related what he himself had done; this one congratulated himself that all had ended so well, praised Ferrer, and prognosticated serious woes for the Superintendent; another, with a laughing air, said, "Do not be afraid; they will not kill each other, the wolf does not devour the flesh of the wolf;" whilst a fifth, more angrily murmured, that the thing had not been done as it ought to have been, that it was as thunder, and that it had been a folly to make so much noise, only to let themselves then be decoyed in this manner.

Meanwhile the sun had set, and all objects were clothed in the same sombre hue; many, wearied from the exertions of the day and tired of thus gossiping in the twilight, returned home. Our youth, after he had aided the progress of the carriage as far as assistance was necessary, after he had followed close

behind it, between these files of soldiers, as though in triumph, had congratulated himself, when he saw the coach drive on freely and out of danger, had proceeded a short way along the street with the mob, and then had issued forth through the first opening to which he came, in order himself to breathe a little free air. Scarcely had he taken a few steps at his ease, than, in the midst of so much agitation, of so many sentiments of so many recent and confused images, he felt a strong desire for food and repose; and he began looking about him on every side in search of some public-house sign, for it was already too late to return to the Capuchin convent. Walking along with his gaze thus directed upwards, he found himself close upon one of these knots of people. He stopped and listened how they discoursed upon their conjectures and designs for the day following. Having remained one moment to listen, he could not preserve himself from delivering his opinion, and it appearing to him that he who had done so much might certainly without presumption say something. Persuaded from all he had seen to-day, that, in order to make any enterprise succeed, it was only necessary to bring it into favour with those who wander about the streets, "Gentlemen!" he cried in a tone of exordium, "gentlemen! May I also give my humble opinion? My humble opinion is this: that it is not alone in the affair of bread that knavish tricks are played; and since to-day it has been clearly seen that one has only to make oneself heard to obtain justice, it is necessary to proceed in this manner until a remedy has been found for all the other wickedness, and until the world goes on in a more Christian style.

And is it not true, gentlemen, that there is a handful of tyrants who think proper to break the Ten Commandments, and seek out quiet people who never think about them, in order to injure them in a thousand ways, and yet who at the end are always in the right? Even when they have committed a greater villany than usual, they walk along holding their heads higher than ever. In Milan itself, there must be a certain quantity of these men."

"Only too many," said a voice.

"I say it, I do," replied Renzo; "already histories are related among us. And then the thing speaks for itself. Let us suppose, for example, one of these men who stands as it were with one foot in the country and one in Milan; if he be a devil there, he will not be an angel here, it appears to me. Then tell me, gentlemen, have you ever seen one of these people with the countenance of a Ferrer? And then what makes this conduct even worse, and this I can tell you as a certainty, is that there are proclamations printed for their chastisement, and they are not all proclamations founded on nothing; their crimes are clearly enumerated, just as they happen, and to each one its good punishment, and it is written, 'Whosoever he be, ignoble and plebeian, etc.' Now, go and desire the doctors, the scribes, and the pharisees, to cause justice to be done you, according to the command of the proclamation, and they will pay you as much attention as the Pope does to rogues; this is enough to turn an honest man's brain. One sees then clearly that the king and those who are in command desire that these scoundrels should be chastised; but nothing is done, because there is a law. There-

fore, it is necessary to break this law; it is necessary to go to-morrow to Ferrer, who is a brave gentleman, a worthy Signor; and to-day, we have been able to see how happy he was to find himself among poor people, and how he sought to hear their arguments, and with what a good grace he answered. We must go to Ferrer, and tell him how affairs stand; and I, for my own part, can recount to him very fine things. I who have seen with my own eyes a proclamation, with lots of coats-of-arms at the top, and which had been made by three of those who are at the head of affairs, and underneath their names beautifully printed, and one of these names was Ferrer, this I have seen with my own eyes; now this proclamation was just applicable to my case; but to a Doctor, to whom I in consequence applied for justice, according to the intention of these three Signors, among whom was Ferrer, to this Signor Doctor, who himself had shewn me the proclamation, this is the best of all, ah, ah! it seemed that I talked like a madman. I am certain that did this dear old man hear all these fine things,—for he cannot know them all, especially those belonging to the country,—he would not wish that the world should go on in this manner, and would apply some good remedy. And then, besides, those who make these proclamations must have pleasure in seeing them obeyed; for it is an insult, an epitaph with their names, to count them as nothing. And if the nobles will not lower their heads, and listen to reason, we are here to assist them, as we have done to-day. I do not say he ought to drive about in his coach to catch all the villains, nobles and tyrants; if he did, he would require Noah's Ark. He should command those whose duty

it is, and not alone those in Milan, but also those in the country, to do all things conformable to the instructions laid down in these proclamations; and commence a good law-suit against those who have committed these iniquities; and where it says, 'prison,' let us have the prison,—where it says, 'the galleys,' let us have the galleys; and say to the Podestà that he shall do all these things truly; if not, send him about his business, and place a better in his stead; and then, as I said before, we should be also here, to lend him a helping hand. And order the doctors also to listen to the poor, and speak in defence of their right. Have I said well, gentlemen?"

Renzo had spoken so entirely from his heart, that, from the commencement, a considerable number of those assembled had suspended all other discourse, and had turned towards him; and, at a certain point, all had become his auditors. A confused shout of applause, of "bravo, certainly, he has reason, it is only too true," were the answers of his audience. But critics were not wanting. "O yes!" said one, "listen to these mountaineers! They are all lawyers!" and he went his way. "Now," muttered another, "every bare-legged fellow will have his say; and, with this rage to busy themselves about every thing, we never shall have cheap bread; is it on this account we have put ourselves in motion?" Renzo, however, only heard the compliment; some took him by one hand, some seized him by the other, "until we meet to-morrow!" "Where? In the Cathedral square.—Yes, good.—Very good. And something will be done?—And something will be done!"

"Which of these good gentlemen would tell me

where I may find a hostel, where a poor lad could eat a mouthful, drink a glass, and sleep?" said Renzo.

"I am at your service, my good youth," said one who had attentively listened to this sermon, and as yet had said nothing. "I know an hostel which will suit you precisely; I will recommend you to the host, who is my friend, and an excellent man."

"Here, in the neighbourhood?" Renzo demanded.

"A short distance off," replied the former.

The assembly dissolved, and Renzo, after many pressures of unknown hands, moved off with the unknown, thanking him for his courtesy.

"It is nothing, it is nothing," returned the stranger; "one hand washes the other, and both wash the face. Ought we not to oblige our neighbour?" And pursuing their road, he asked of Renzo, by way of discourse, now one question, now another. "It is not from any impertinent curiosity to know your affairs; but you appear to me much wearied. From what part of the country do you come?"

"I come all the way from Lecco—all the way."

"All the way from Lecco? You are from Lecco?"

"From Lecco—that is, out of the district."

"Poor youth! From what I have been able to understand of your discourse, you have been shamefully treated there."

"Ah, my dear, worthy sir! I have been obliged to be rather politic so as not to speak of my private affairs in public; but ——— enough, some day this will be known, and then ——— But I see an inn sign; and, by my faith, I have no desire to go farther."

"No, no; come where I have told you, it is only

a short way from here," said his guide; "here, you will not be comfortable."

"O yes!" replied the youth; "I am no fine gentleman accustomed to be wrapt up in cotton-wool; something good to put into my stomach, and a straw-bed, will suffice for me. And what particularly concerns me is to find quickly both one and the other. God preserve me!" And he entered the large portal over which hung the sign of the Full Moon.

"Well, I will conduct you there, since you wish it," said the unknown, and he followed him.

"There is no need that you trouble yourself farther," replied Renzo. "However," added he, "if you would come in and take a glass with me, you would do me a pleasure."

"I accept your kind offer," replied the stranger; and preceding Renzo, like one better acquainted with the localities, he passed through a little court and approached a door which led into the kitchen, lifted up the latch, opened it, and went in with his companion. Two small lamps, suspended from the beam of the ceiling, cast below a half light. Many people, none of them however in idleness, were seated upon two benches placed on each side a long and narrow table, which occupied a considerable portion of the apartment. Here and there, at intervals, napkins and plates were laid; cards were to be seen lying in confusion, dice thrown down or again collected together; everywhere large flasks and glasses. There were also to be seen many *berlinge*, *reali*, and *parpagliole*, rolling about on the table, which, could they have spoken, would most probably have said, "this morning we were in a baker's till, or in the

pocket of some spectator among the mob, who, all intent upon watching the course of public events, forgot to watch over his own little private affairs."

The confusion was great. A boy wildly rushed backwards and forwards to wait upon the revellers and the gamesters; the host was seated upon a small bench within the wide chimney, apparently occupied in tracing and again effacing with the tongs certain figures among the ashes; but, in reality, he was attending to all that passed around him. He rose when he heard the raising of the latch, and advanced towards the newly arrived guests. As soon as he perceived who was the guide, "Cursed fellow!" he exclaimed to himself, "why must thou always come under my feet when I have the least wish for thee!" He then cast a glance at Renzo, saying again to himself, "I do not know thee; but coming with such a hunter, thou must needs be either dog or hare; I shall know which of the two thou art, when thou hast said two words." However, not one of these reflections could be traced in the host's countenance, which remained as motionless as that of a portrait; it was a countenance plump and shiny, with a small thick beard of a reddish colour, and with two small sharp clear eyes.

"What do these gentlemen command?" said he aloud.

"First of all a good flask of good wine," said Renzo, "and then a mouthful of something." And saying this, he seated himself upon a bench towards the upper end of the table, and sent forth a sonorous "Ah!" as if to say, "It does one good to rest upon a bench, after one has been such a long time busy on

one's legs." But suddenly there occurred to his mind that bench and that table to which he had sat for the last time with Lucia and Agnese, and he heaved a sigh. He shook his head, however, as though to drive away this thought, and saw the host arrive with the wine. The unknown companion had placed himself on the bench facing Renzo. Our good youth immediately poured him out some wine, saying, "So, wet your lips!" And having filled the other glass, he emptied it in a moment.

"What can you give me to eat?" he then demanded of the host.

"I have a piece of stewed meat; does this please you?" replied the other.

"Yes, excellently; let us have some of the stewed meat."

"You shall be served," said the host to Renzo; and to the waiter, "serve this stranger;" and then moved off towards the chimney. "But,"—he continued, turning to Renzo, "but, bread I have not to-day."

"As for bread," said Renzo, laughing, "Providence has thought of that." And he drew forth the third and last of the little loaves of bread picked up under the cross of San Dionigi, and raised it on high, crying, "Here is the bread of Providence!"

At this exclamation, many of the guests turned round, and seeing this trophy in the air, one of them cried, "Bread for ever at a cheap rate!"

"At a cheap rate!" said Renzo, "*gratis et amore*."

"Better, still better."

"But," added Renzo immediately, "I do not wish these Signors to think ill of me. I have not, as one

might say, stolen it; I have found it lying on the ground, and if the owner could be found, I am ready to pay him for it."

"Bravo, bravo!" shouted the guests, laughing still louder; and it occurred to not one of them that these words were said in earnest.

"You imagine I am joking, but this is really what I mean," said Renzo to his guide; and turning the cake round in his hand, added, "you see how it has been treated; it looks as flat as a pancake; but there was such a crowd! If any one had been there with tender bones, he would have come badly off! And immediately he devoured three or four mouthfuls of this bread, sending after them a second cup of wine, adding, "This bread will not go down by itself. I never have had my throat so dry. That was a grand shout we gave."

"Prepare a good bed for this worthy young man," said the guide, "for he intends to sleep here."

"You will sleep here?" demanded the host, approaching the table.

"Certainly," replied Renzo, "I can put up with any sort of a bed; it is sufficient if the sheets are only clean; for, although I am a poor fellow, I am accustomed to cleanliness.*

"Oh! as to that ——," said the host, going to his counter, which stood in one corner of the kitchen, from whence he brought in one hand an inkstand and a small piece of paper, and in the other a pen.

"What does this mean?" cried Renzo, swallowing

* Here, in the original, is an untranslatable play upon the word *pulizia*, which signifies both *police* and *cleanliness*. This explains the host's answer, who at first imagines Renzo to be a spy.

a piece of the stewed meat which the boy had placed before him, and then, smiling in amazement, added, "Is this then the clean sheet?"

The host, without replying, placed upon the table, the inkstand and the paper; then supported his left arm and right elbow upon the same table, and then, with the pen in the air, and his face raised towards Renzo, he said, "Do me the favour to tell me your name, surname, and country."

"What is this?" said Renzo. "What has all this to do with the bed?"

"I do my duty," said the host, gazing into the guide's face: "we are obliged to render an account of all those persons who come to lodge with us,— 'name and surname, of what country he is, upon what business he is come, whether he has arms with him, how long he may remain in this city.' These are the very words of the proclamation."

Before answering, Renzo emptied another glass, this was the third; and henceforth I fear we shall no longer be able to enumerate them. "Ah, ah!" he cried, "you have your proclamation! I pride myself upon being a doctor of laws, and therefore I know immediately how much importance is attached to these proclamations."

"I speak the truth," said the host, still gazing at Renzo's mute companion; and he again went to the counter, drew forth a large sheet of paper, a copy of the proclamation, which he unfolded before Renzo's eyes.

"Ah, here it is," said our friend; raising with one hand the glass which he had again emptied, and stretching out his other hand, with one finger pointing towards the proclamation. "Ah, here it is; this

beautiful sheet of paper. I rejoice myself extremely on its account. I know these coats-of-arms; I know what is the meaning of this Pagan face, with this cord round his neck." At the head of proclamations were then placed the Governor's armorial bearings; and in those of Don Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordova was seen a Moorish king, chained by the throat. "This face signifies—command who can, obey who will. When this face shall have sent to the galleys the Signor Don ——, enough, I know what I would say; as it says in another scrap of paper similar to this, when he shall have taken such measures that an honest young man can marry an honest young woman who is happy to marry him, then I will tell my name to this face. I will even moreover give it a kiss. I can have very good reasons for not telling it my name. This would be fine, indeed! And if a great villain who might have a handful of other villains under his command, because if he should be alone ——" here he finished his phrase by a gesture; "if a great villain should wish to know where I am, in order to do me a bad turn, I ask, would this face ever bestir itself to assist me? Ought I to tell it my affairs? This is certainly something new. And even suppose I were come to Milan to confess myself, I would rather confess myself to a Capuchin father than to a host."

The host remained silent, and continued to regard the guide, who did not exhibit the slightest intention to depart. Renzo, we are grieved to say it, drained another glass and continued; "I will give thee a reason, my dear host, which will convince thee. If the proclamations which speak in favour of good Christians count for nothing, all the less should those

which speak ill of them. Therefore, remove all these annoyances, and bring instead another flask, for this is broken." Saying this, he struck it lightly with his knuckles, and added, "listen, listen, host; how cracked it sounds!"

This time also, Renzo, by little and little, had attracted the attention of those who surrounded him; and also this time he was applauded by his auditory.

"What ought I to do?" said the host, looking at the unknown, who, however, was not unknown to him.

"Come, come," cried many of these merry companions, "this youth is right; they are all oppressions, snares, annoyances; let us have to-day a new law—a new law!"

In the midst of these cries, the unknown, casting a reproving glance at the host for this too open interrogation, said, "let him follow his own course; do not make a scene."

"I have done my duty," said the host aloud; and then thought to himself, "Now I have put myself under shelter." He took up the paper, the pen, the inkstand, the proclamation, and the empty flask, to consign them to the boy.

"Bring me some more of the same wine," said Renzo, "and we will send him to bed without demanding from him his name, his surname, and of what country he is, and for what he is come here, and whether he has to stay a little while in this city."

"Of the same," said the host to the boy; giving him the flask at the same time, and he returned to seat himself under the wide chimney.—"Nothing less than a hare," thought he, again playing with the ashes; "and into what hands art thou fallen, thou

great ass! If thou wilt strangle thyself, why strangle thyself; but the landlord of the Full Moon will not get into trouble through thee."

Renzo thanked his guide, and all those who had taken his part. "Brave friends!" he said; "now I clearly see that gentlemen give each other their hands and sustain each other." Then flourishing his right hand in the air, and again assuming the attitude of a preacher, "it is a fine thing," he exclaimed, "that those who rule the world will always make paper, pens and ink, enter into every thing whatsoever! Always the pen in the hand! What a madness all these Signors have for using the pen!"

"Eh, good country youth! Would you know the reason of this?" said, laughing, one of the gamesters who had just been victorious.

"Let us hear," replied Renzo.

"The reason is this; because these Signors eat the geese, and find upon them so many, many quills, that it becomes quite necessary to do something with them."

All began to laugh, except the companion who lost.

"Oh, oh!" said Renzo, "this good fellow is a poet. You have poets here also; they spring up everywhere now. I myself also have the vein, and sometimes say curious things—— but when affairs are better."

In order to understand poor Renzo's nonsense, it is necessary to know that among the lower class in Milan, and even more particularly in the surrounding country, Poet does not signify as among the educated, a sacred spirit, an inhabitant of Pindus, a pupil of the Muses,—but rather a whimsical and giddy-brained fellow, who, in his words and in his deeds, has more

of wit and singularity than of reason. So great is the inclination of the vulgar to alter the true meaning of words, and to make them express ideas the farthest from their legitimate signification! For, I ask, what in the world has the word poet to do with this giddy-brain?

“But I will tell you the real reason, that I will,” added Renzo; “it is because it is they who hold the pen—the words which they themselves say fly away and disappear; on the contrary, they are very attentive to the words of a poor lad, and quickly they empale these words during their flight with this pen, and fasten them down upon paper, to make use of when time and place shall present themselves. They have also another crafty scheme; when they wish to embarrass a poor lad who has not studied, but who nevertheless has a little—I know very well what I mean,” and to make himself understood he struck his forehead with the tip of his first finger. “And when they perceive that he begins to comprehend this confused business, they throw into the discourse some Latin words, so as to make him lose the thread of their argument, and puzzle his brains; enough—this practice ought to be discountenanced. To-day, every thing has been well managed after the manner of the people, without pen, ink, or paper; and to-morrow, if the people will only know how to govern themselves, even better things will be done, and this without hurting the hair of a single head. and all in the way of justice.”

In the meantime some of his companions had again returned to their gaming, others to their eating, others to their shouting; some departed, others arrived; the

host was attentive to one and all; but these are affairs which have nothing at all to do with our story. Still the unknown guide did not seem inclined to take his departure; he had, as it appeared, no other affair in this place, yet he would not depart before having gossiped a little more with Renzo. He turned round to him, and renewed the conversation regarding bread; and after a few of those phrases which already for some time had been in all mouths, he put forth one of his own projects.

“Ah! if I commanded, I would discover the way to make affairs go on well!”

“How would you manage?” demanded Renzo, gazing at him with eyes more brilliant than usual, and twisting his mouth somewhat, as though he would remain particularly attentive.

“How I would manage? I should wish there to be bread for every one; as much for the poor as for the rich.”

“Ah! that is very good,” said Renzo.

“This is what I would do: I would fix an honest price, so that every one should be able to buy. And then bread should be distributed according to the number of mouths, for there are thoughtless gluttons who desire all for themselves, scramble for all they can get, and seize upon all that comes in their way, and thus the poor want bread. Therefore, the bread must be divided. And how is this to be done? In this manner; give a ticket to each family, in proportion to the number of mouths, so that they may go and fetch bread from the bakers. To myself, for example, they ought to deliver a ticket after this form—Ambrogio Fusella, sword-cutler by profession, with

a wife and four children, all old enough to eat bread, pay attention to this; he shall be given bread to a considerable amount, and pay to a considerable amount. But justice must be done, always with regard to the number of mouths. And to you, for example, they ought to give a ticket for——what is your name?"

"Lorenzo Tramaglino," said the youth; who quite enchanted with this project, no longer remarked that all this had to do with pens, ink, and paper, and that to bring it into operation, the first thing must be the collecting people's names.

"Very good," said the unknown; "but have you a wife and children?"

"I ought certainly to have — not children — that would be too soon — but a wife — if the world were as it ought to be ——"

"Ah! you are alone. Therefore have patience, they will give you a smaller portion."

"That is just; but if soon, as I hope — and with the aid of God — but if I should also have a wife myself?"

"Why then the ticket would be changed, and your portion increased, as I have said, always with regard to the number of mouths," said the unknown, rising.

"This is excellent," cried Renzo, continuing to shout and strike his fist upon the table; "and wherefore have they not made such a law?"

"What would you have me say? In the meantime, I wish you a good-night, and take my leave; for I think my wife and the children will have been expecting me for some time."

"Another drop, another drop," said Renzo, filling

in haste the other's glass, and suddenly rising and seizing him by a fold of his doublet, pulled him down, in order to force him to seat himself again. "Another drop, another drop, do not do me this affront."

But the friend with one jerk liberated himself, and leaving Renzo to pour forth a torrent of entreaties and reproaches, he again said, "good-night," and departed. Renzo continued to address him, when he was already in the street, and then fell again heavily upon the bench. He fixed his eyes upon the glass which he had again filled, and seeing the waiter pass by the table, he signed to him to stop, as though he had something to communicate to him, and pointing to the glass, in a solemn and slow tone, pronounced these words: "Behold, I had prepared this for that gentleman; only see, it is full measure, just right for a friend; but he would not have it. Sometimes people have curious ideas. I am not to blame; I have shewn my good heart. Well, since the thing has been done, there is no need that it should be lost." And saying this, he took it and emptied it at one draught.

"I understand," said the boy going.

"Ah! you understand, you also," resumed Renzo. "Then it is true. When the reasons are just ——"

All our love of truth is here necessary to enable us to continue faithfully a narrative which does so little honour to so important a character, nay, we might say, to the hero of our history. However, this same impartiality which we profess obliges us to inform the reader that this was the first time such a thing had happened to Renzo; and precisely, because he was not accustomed to such carousals, did this first one succeed so fatally. These few glasses which he had

swallowed one after the other in the commencement, contrary to his usual custom, partly owing to the burning heat which he felt partly owing to his excitement of mind, which allowed him to do nothing by halves, had quickly mount to his head. With an experienced drinker this would have only excited his thirst. Here, our Anonymous makes an observation which we shall repeat, let it be worth what it may. Temperate and moderate habits, says he, possess also this advantage, that the older they have grown, and the deeper they are rooted, in a man, the sooner he finds himself, when wishing to deviate from them, inconvenienced, thus suffering from his fault for some time, his fault even becomes a lesson.

However this might be, when the first fumes had mounted to Renzo's brain, wine and words continued to flow without either measure or rule, and at the point where we left him, he was about as tipsy as he could be. He felt a strong desire to speak; listeners, or at least people around him, whom he could consider as such, were not wanting; and for a certain time his words also had presented themselves without being sought for, and had allowed themselves to be arranged in a certain order. But by little and little the ending of his phrases began to be terribly difficult. The thought which had presented itself clear and strong in his mind, became cloudy and vanished all on a sudden; and a word, after having made itself waited for for some time, was not the one after all, applicable to the case in question. In these perplexities, by one of those fatal instincts which in so many things ruin men, he had recourse to this blessed flask. But of what assistance could the flask be to him under these circumstances?

We will only report a few of the many words he spoke this unfortunate evening; those which we omit are too extravagant, for not only they had no sense, but they had not even the appearance of having any, a necessary condition in a printed book.

“ Ah, host! host!” recommenced Renzo, following him round the table with his eyes, and even until he had returned to his seat under the chimney; sometimes fixing them where he was not, and always speaking in the midst of the clamour made by the company. “ Host, that thou art! I cannot possibly swallow this—this demanding *the name, surname, and business*. From a lad such as I! No, thou hast not acted well. What satisfaction, what advantage, what pleasure—to put a poor lad like me upon paper! Am I right, gentlemen? The host ought to be on the side of honest lads. Listen, listen, host; I wish to make you a comparison—for the argument. They laugh, eh? I am a little gay;—but I give very just reasons. Tell me a little, who is it who keeps the shop a-going? Poor lads, is it not? Am I not right? Only see whether these Signors of the proclamations ever come to thee to drink a little glass of wine?”

“ They are all people who drink water,” said one of Renzo’s neighbours.

“ They wish to keep in their senses,” added another, “ so as to be able to tell lies cleverly.”

“ Ah!” said Renzo, “ now it is the poet who has spoken. Listen, therefore, you others, to my reason. Answer, host. And Ferrer, who is the best of them all, has he ever come here to drink a health, or to spend the half of a *quattrino*? And this dog of an assassin, this Don ——? I remain silent, for I am

not cool enough. Ferrer and the Father Cur——, I know, are two honest men. But there are very few honest men. The old men worse than the young ones, and the young ones—even still worse than the old. However, I am glad that no blood has been spilt; oh, these are horrors to leave to the executioner. Read, oh! as to that, yes! I have received terrible blows, but—then I have also given in return. Make way! abundance! hurrah!—And yet, even Ferrer—these few words in Latin—*sies baraos trapolorum*.—Cursed fault! Vivat! Justice! bread! Ah, here are the just words! There it was these honest men—when this cursed ton, ton, ton, was heard, and then again, ton, ton, ton. The question was not then to fly, but to keep the Signor Curato there—I know what I am thinking about!”

With these words he bowed his head and remained some time as though absorbed in thought; then he heaved a deep sigh, and raised a countenance and two such sparkling eyes full of so severe an anguish, that it would have been woe unto the author of this excitement had he been there to witness it but for one moment. But these men, who had already begun to amuse themselves with his impassioned and confused eloquence, were now still more amused by his emotion. Those who were nearest him said to the others, “look;” and all turned round, so that he became the laughing-stock of the whole company. Not because the others were in their right senses, but, to say the truth, no one had so entirely lost his as poor Renzo, and then, besides, he was a peasant. They began first one and then another to excite him, by asking foolish and impertinent questions with a

mock ceremony. Renzo now appeared to grow angry, now would treat the thing as a joke; again, without paying attention to these questions, would speak about quite different subjects, would reply, or again in his turn would question, always, however, in the wrong place, and in a most senseless manner. Fortunately, however, in the midst of this folly he had retained a kind of instinct which preserved him from pronouncing the names of certain persons, so that the one which must have been the most deeply engraven in his memory did not pass his lips. It would have displeased us too much, had this name, for which we even feel a little love and respect, been defiled by these disgusting mouths, and had become the amusement of these vile tongues.

CHAPTER XV.

THE host, perceiving that the game was being carried too far, approached Renzo, and, politely beseeching the others to leave him alone, shook him by one arm and endeavoured to make him understand that he had better go to bed. But Renzo returned always to the same subjects, to *the name, the surname, to the proclamations, and to the good lads*. However, these words, *bed* and *sleep*, repeated so often in his ear, at length entered his head, they made him feel somewhat more distinctly the necessity of that which they signified, and procured a lucid interval. The little sense which returned to him, caused him, in a certain way, to remark that the greater portion had left him, in the same manner that the last expiring taper in an illumination shews the others already extinguished. He formed a resolution, he supported himself upon the table; attempted once or twice to rise; sighed, staggered, and, at the third attempt, aided by the host, was upon his feet. The host, supporting him all the time, made him come from between the table and the bench, and taking in one hand the light, with the other partly conducted and partly dragged him along, in the best manner he could, to the staircase door. There Renzo, hearing the uproar of salutations which the company shouted after him, hastily turned round; and if the one who supported

him had not quickly seized him by the arm, he would have had a violent fall. He turned round, and then with the arm which remained at liberty he began tracing and writing in the air certain salutations, very much after the fashion of a Solomon's knot.

"Come, to bed, to bed," said the host, dragging him along; he pushed him through the doorway, then, with still more fatigue, supported him to the top of the little staircase, and into the little chamber which he had destined for him. At the sight of the bed which awaited him, Renzo rejoiced, and regarded his host most lovingly with two small eyes, which now gleamed brighter than ever, now vanished like two fire-flies; he endeavoured to balance himself upon his legs, and stretched forth his hand to caress the host's cheek in sign of friendship and gratitude, but he did not succeed. "Excellent host!" he however managed to say, "now I see that thou art a worthy man, thus to give a poor lad a bed; but this nonsense about *name* and *surname*, that was not like a worthy man. Fortunately, however, I am also ——"

The host, who did not think that he could still be so collected in his ideas—the host, who knew from a long experience that men in this state are even more than usually liable to change their opinion, wished to profit by this lucid interval, and made another attempt. "My dear fellow," said he, with a very gentle voice and manner, "I have not, indeed, done this with the desire of troubling you, or of prying into your affairs. What would you have me do? It is the law; we also are obliged to obey it; besides, we are the very first who suffer the penalty imposed. It is better to conform. After all, what is all this?"

A mighty affair! The saying two words. Not in the least important on their own account, but merely to do me a favour; come—here, alone with me, under four eyes, we will transact our business; tell me your name, and then go to bed with a quiet mind.”

“Ah, rascal!” exclaimed Renzo; “knave! Thou art returned again into the field with thy infamous *name, surname, and business!*”

“Hush! you fool; and go to bed,” said the host.

But Renzo continued even more loudly, “I understand thou art also in this league. Wait, wait, I will settle thee, I will.” And turning his head towards the staircase, he shouted as loud as he could, “Friends! the host is in the ——”

“I have said this in jest,” cried the other in Renzo’s face, and pushed him towards the bed; “in jest; didst thou not understand it was only in jest?”

“Ah! in jest! now thou speakest well. Since thou hast spoken in jest —— These are proper things to jest about.” And he fell prostrate on the bed.

“Come, undress yourself quickly,” said the host, and to his advice he added his assistance, of which there was much need. When Renzo had pulled off his doublet, he seized it suddenly, and felt with his hands in the pockets, to see whether there was any little hoard there. He found it; and thinking that the following day his guest would have to account with quite other people than he, and that most probably this hoard would fall into hands out of which a host would never again be able to get it, he wished to see, at least, whether he would not now settle his little affair.

“You are a good fellow, an honest man, are you not?” said he.

“ Good fellow, honest man,” replied Renzo, his fingers busied with the buttons of his hose, which he had not yet taken off.

“ Well,” said the host, “ settle with me now my little bill, for to-morrow I am obliged to leave home on account of certain affairs of mine ——”

“ That is but just,” returned Renzo; “ I am a rogue, yet an honest man —— But where is my money —— Go and search for the money, now!”

“ There it is,” said the host; and putting into operation all his practice, all his patience, all his skill, he succeeded in making out his reckoning with Renzo, and in paying himself.

“ Lend me a hand to finish undressing,” said Renzo; “ I also know, as well as you, that I have a heavy sleep upon me.”

The host gave him the required assistance; and more than that he drew the coverlid over him, and roughly wished him “ good-night;” but our Renzo snored already. Then, governed by that species of attraction which sometimes induces us to gaze upon an object of hatred, as well as of love, and which is, perhaps, no other than the desire of knowing that which operates so strongly upon our soul,—he stopped a moment to contemplate this guest, who had caused him such vexation; and raising the light above the sleeper, and with his outstretched hands casting the rays full upon his face, much in the same attitude that Psyche is painted when she stands contemplating the form of her unknown consort,—“ great ass!” he said, mentally apostrophising the poor unconscious sleeper, “ thou hast properly gone in search of thy own misfortune. To-morrow thou canst tell me how it pleases

thy own taste. Clowns who wander through the world, without knowing in which quarter the sun rises, with no other aim than that of getting yourselves and your neighbours into trouble."

This said, or thought, he drew back the light, moved away, went out of the chamber, and locked the door. Arrived on the landing-place, he called the hostess, whom he told to leave her children in the care of one of her servants, and descend to the kitchen, there to preside in his stead. "I am obliged to go out, thanks to a stranger who has arrived here for my misfortune," he added; and related in a few words this vexatious accident. Then he again added—"Have an eye upon every thing; but above all, be prudent in this cursed business. Down stairs, we have a handful of dissolute fellows, who, partly through drinking, and partly because they are naturally vile, say all manner of things. Enough, if any fool-hardy ——"

"O! I am no child; I know well enough myself, what must be done. Until now, it does not seem to me it can be said ——"

"Good, good,—and take care that they pay; and as to their discourses about the Superintendent of Provisions, about the Governor Ferrer, and the Council of Ten, and the knights of Spain and France, and about all such nonsense, do not seem to pay any attention; because if thou shouldst contradict them, that might bring forth immediate evil, and if thou shouldst agree with them that could occasion evil in the future; and thou knowest that those who sometimes speak the strongest—enough; when certain questions are asked, turn aside thy head, and say, 'I am coming,' as

though some one called thee from some other part of the room. I will try and return as soon as possible." Having said this, he descended with her into the kitchen, cast a glance around to see that there was nothing fresh, and taking down from a peg his hat and cloak, took his stick out of a corner, repeated by an expressive glance towards his wife the instructions he had just given, and set forth. But, whilst busied with these operations, he had resumed in his mind the apostrophe commenced at poor Renzo's bed, and pursued it whilst he walked on through the streets.

"Blockhead of a mountaineer!" For, however much Renzo had desired to conceal the fact, this characteristic had shewn itself in his every word, in his pronounciation, in his appearance, in his manners. "On a day like this, by force of policy, by force of judgment, I had got off well; and then thou must needs come at the end, and spoil my egg in the basket! Is there a dearth of inns in Milan, that thou must precisely stumble upon mine? If thou hadst only come alone, I should have closed my eyes for this evening, and to-morrow I would have made thee hear reason. But no, my gentleman came in company, and in the company of an informer, to make the matter better!"

At each step which he took the host encountered solitary passengers, or troops and companies of people, who murmured among themselves as they passed by. At this point in his silent discourse he saw a patrol of soldiers approach; and drawing himself aside, so as to let them pass by, he glanced at them out of the corner of his eye, and said to himself,— "there go fool-punishers! And thou great donkey! because thou hast seen a few people in movement

making a noise, hast got it into thy head, that the world was about to change itself. And upon this good foundation thou hast ruined thyself, and hast wished also to ruin me; which is not just. I did all in my power to save thee; and thou fool, in exchange, hast wanted but little to turn my hostel topsy-turvy. Now it will be for thee to extricate thyself from this troublesome business; as for myself, I shall think about my own affairs. As though I wanted to know thy name out of curiosity! What does it matter to me whether thou art called Taddeo, or Bartolommeo? And what a great pleasure I must have in taking a pen in my hand! But you are not the only people who desire that things should go on after your own fashion. I know very well myself that there are proclamations which are counted as nothing; a fine piece of news this, for a mountaineer to come and tell you! But thou dost not know, perhaps, that the proclamations against landlords count for something. And thou wilt endeavour to change the world, and wilt speak; and yet thou dost not know that when one wishes to do as the world does, and to have the proclamations in one's pocket, the first thing is to speak of them with great respect. And dost thou know, great simpleton, dost thou know what would happen to a poor landlord who should be of thy opinion, and should not demand the name of those who do him the favour to stay at his house? 'Under penalty, of whoever of the aforesaid hosts, keepers of taverns, of three hundred scudi;' yes, here are three hundred scudi hatched, and a very good way to spend them too; 'to be applied, the two-thirds to the use of the royal chamber, and the other third to the use of the accuser or informer.' This

beautiful swan! ‘And, in case of inability, five years of the galleys, or greater punishment, pecuniary or corporal, according to the will of his Excellency.’ A thousand thanks for his kindness!”

And saying these words, the host touched the threshold of the hall of justice.

Here, as in all other public offices, there was a great bustle; everywhere were persons occupied in issuing such orders as appeared calculated to ensure the peace of the day following, so as to remove all pretext for revolt, and cool the minds of those who desired fresh disorders, and also to establish power in those hands accustomed to exercise it. The number of soldiers was increased at the Superintendent’s house; the ends of the streets were barricadoed with beams of wood, and blocked up with carts. The bakers were ordered to make bread without intermission; couriers were despatched into the neighbouring villages, with orders to send grain into the city; nobles were deputed to attend at each bake-house from the early morning, to watch over the distribution of bread, and to keep by their fine speeches and their authority the unquiet spirits in check. But to give, as the saying is, a blow to the hoop and another to the cask, and to render these arrangements still more efficacious, by infusing a little terror into them, they even set about thinking how they should lay hands upon some of the seditious; and this was the principal care of the Capitano di Giustizia. This bloodhound had been in the field from the commencement of the tumult; and this seducing Ambrogio Fusella was, as our host had said, a disguised informer, sent out to seize some unfortunate wretch in

the fact, thus be enabled to recognise him, watch him secretly, and then deliver him up at night when quiet should have returned, or on the morrow.

Having heard four words of Renzo's sermon, he immediately calculated upon him, our hero appearing an excellent criminal and exactly a fit subject for him. Finding that he was newly arrived from the country he had attempted the grand stratagem of conducting him directly to the prison, as to the surest lodging in the city, but this failed, as we have seen. However, he could carry home with him certain information regarding his name, surname, and country, besides a hundred other conjectures; so that when the host arrived there to say what he knew about Renzo, they already knew more than he. He entered the accustomed chamber and made his report; said how a stranger was come to lodge at his house, and how this same stranger would not give up his name.

"You have done your duty in informing us," said a notary, laying down his pen; "but we already know this."

"A fine secret," thought the host; "that requires a mighty genius!"

"And we know also," continued the notary, "this much respected name."

"The devil! the name also; how have they managed?" thought the host again to himself.

"But," replied the notary, with a serious countenance, "but you do not tell us all candidly."

"What ought I to say more?"

"Ah, ah! we know very well that this person brought into your hostel a quantity of bread which he had stolen, stolen by violence, became possessed of by pillage and sedition."

“A man comes with a cake in his pocket; I am very likely to know where he has taken it from. And to speak as though at the point of death, I can only say I saw him with one small loaf.”

“Always the way with you! Always excusing yourselves—always defending yourselves! To hear you, these fellows are all honest men. How can you prove that this loaf was honestly acquired?”

“What have I to prove? I do not enter into the affair; I was the host.”

“You cannot however deny that this fellow, your customer, has had the audacity to pronounce words injurious to the proclamations, and to make indecent and irreverent jokes about the armorial bearings of his Excellency.”

“Pardon me, your lordship; but how can he be one of my customers if I now see him for the first time? It is the devil—speaking with all due respect—who has sent him to my house. If I had known him, your lordship sees I should not have needed to ask his name.”

“However, in your hostel, in your presence, have been spoken terrible things: audacious words, seditious proposals; murmurings, shouts, clamour, have been heard.”

“How? Would your lordship have me pay attention to nonsense which so many drunkards bawl all at once? I am a poor man, I must attend to my own interest. And then, your lordship knows that those who have a free tongue have generally a nimble hand, and all the more so when they are in a body, and ——”

“Yes, yes; let them do and say what pleases them;

to-morrow, to-morrow, you will see whether this wantonness has left him. What do you think?"

"I do not think anything."

"That the mob will have made itself master of Milan?"

"Oh, certainly!"

"You shall see, you shall see."

"I understand very well. The king will always be the king; but whoever has taken anything will keep it, and naturally a poor father of a family will not desire to deliver it up. Your lordships have the power, and it is your lordships' business."

"Have you still many people in your house?"

"A considerable quantity."

"And what is your customer doing? Is he still shouting, exciting the people, and preparing seditions for the morrow?"

"This stranger, your lordship would say; he is gone to bed."

"You have then a considerable number of people—enough; take care and do not let him escape."

"Am I then to play the turnkey?" thought the host, but he said neither no nor yes.

"Return home, and be prudent," resumed the notary.

"I have always been prudent. Your lordship can say whether I ever have been brought up to justice."

"And do not think that justice has lost its power."

"I? Good heavens! I do not think anything. I am careful to act the landlord."

"The old song; have you nothing more to say?"

"What else have I to say? Is not truth one?"

"Good! what you have deposed is sufficient for

to-day. The case will be seen to; to-morrow you will inform us minutely regarding every thing that will be demanded of you."

"How can I inform you of anything? I know nothing; I have scarcely head-piece enough to attend to my own affairs."

"Take care, and do not let him depart."

"I hope that the illustrious Signor Capitano will know that I came immediately to fulfil my duty. I kiss your lordship's hands."

At break of day, Renzo had been snoring for seven hours, and was yet, poor fellow, in his deepest sleep, when two violent shakes by the arm, and a voice which proceeded from the bed's-foot, shouting, "Lorenzo Tramaglino!" woke him all of a sudden. He returned to consciousness, stretched out his arms, opened his eyes with difficulty, and saw standing at the foot of the bed a man clothed in black, and two armed attendants, one on either side of his bolster. Renzo, what between the surprise, the sleep, and the fumes of the wine, remained a moment like one enchanted. Believing that he still dreamed, and not finding the dream very agreeable, he moved as though to awake himself thoroughly.

"Ah, you have heard at last, Lorenzo Tramaglino," said the man in the black cloak, the notary of the preceding evening. "Come, then, get up, and come with us."

"Lorenzo Tramaglino!" said Renzo Tramaglino; "what is the meaning of this? What do you want with me? Who has told you my name?"

"Chatter less, and make haste," said one of the constables who stood at his side, taking him again by the arm.

"Oh, oh! What outrage is this?" cried Renzo, drawing away his arm. "Host! oh, host!"

"Shall we carry him off in his shirt?" asked the other constable, turning towards the notary.

"Do you understand?" returned the latter, addressing Renzo. "This shall be done, unless you get up very quickly and come along with us."

"And wherefore?" demanded Renzo.

"The wherefore you shall hear from the Signor Capitano di Giustizia."

"I? I am an honest man, I have done nothing; and I am astonished ——"

"All the better for you, all the better for you; with two words you will be set free, and can go about your business."

"Let me go now," said Renzo; "I have nothing to do with justice."

"Come, let us have done with it!" said a constable.

"Let us carry him away!" said the other.

"Lorenzo Tramaglino!" said the notary.

"How does your lordship know my name?"

"Do your duty," said the notary to the constable, who immediately laid hands upon Renzo to draw him out of bed.

"Ah, don't touch an honest man's body—for—I know how to dress myself."

"Then dress yourself quickly," said the notary.

"I am dressing myself," replied Renzo; and in fact set about collecting the various garments which lay scattered over the bed, like the fragments of a shipwreck upon a coast. And beginning to put them on, he continued, all the time saying, "but I do not wish to go to the Capitano di Giustizia. I have nothing

to do with him; since this unjust affront has been offered me, I wish to be conducted to Ferrer. I know this, I know that he is an honest man, and he is somewhat indebted to me."

"Yes, yes, my son, thou shalt be conducted to Ferrer," replied the notary.

Under other circumstances he would have laughed heartily at such a proposition; but this was not a moment in which to laugh. Already in coming along he had seen in the streets a certain commotion, but he had not been able to decide whether this were the remains of a revolt which had not yet entirely subsided, or the commencement of a fresh one; there was a rushing in of people, a meeting, a marching in companies, a collecting in knots. And now, without appearing, or at least striving not to appear to do so, he was busied listening, and it seemed to him that the noise increased. He was, therefore, desirous of making as much speed as possible; but he would also have wished to conduct Renzo away quietly, and with his own consent; for, should he come to open war with him in the street, he could not be certain whether he should find them still three to one. Therefore, he gave the constables to understand by a glance that they should have patience, and not exasperate the young man; and himself sought to persuade him by gentle speeches. The youth, whilst he dressed himself very slowly, recalled to mind, as well as he could, the events of the past day, and pretty nearly guessed that the proclamation, and the name, and the surname, must be the cause of all; but how the devil did this fellow know his name? And what the devil could have happened in the

night, to make officers of justice courageous enough thus to come boldly, and lay hands upon one of these brave lads, whose voice but the preceding day had been of so much weight in the assembly? And yet they could not all be asleep, since Renzo also perceived an increasing noise in the street. At length, looking into the notary's countenance, he discovered the agitation which the other endeavoured in vain to keep concealed. Then, as though to throw some light upon these conjectures, and to reconnoitre the country, to gain time, and even to attempt a bold stroke, he said, "I see well what is the cause of all this; it is from love of the name and surname; truly, last night I was somewhat gay; these hosts have sometimes certain very treacherous wines; and sometimes, I say, it is well known that when wine is in the body, it is the wine that speaks. But, if this concerns nothing else, I am ready to give you every satisfaction: Besides, you already know my name. Who the devil has told it you?"

"Bravo, my fine fellow, bravo!" replied the notary, with a very polite air. "I see that you are right, and you may believe me, who am of the profession, that you are gentler than all the others. This is the best way to get off quickly and well; with this good disposition, you will be dismissed with two words, and set at liberty. But see, my son, I have my hands bound, and cannot release you here, as I should like. Come, make haste, and only come on without fear; when they see who you are — and then I will say — Allow me to act — enough; make haste, my son."

"Ah! you cannot; I know how," said Renzo; and

he continued to dress himself, pushing back the constables, who endeavoured to lay hold of him so as to hasten his operations.

"Shall we pass through the Cathedral-square?" he at length demanded of the notary.

"Any way you like, the shortest way, so as to get you the sooner liberated," said our notary, tormenting himself inwardly, whether he ought to let this mysterious demand of Renzo, which might become the subject of a hundred questions, fall to the ground. "What a thing it is to be born unfortunate!" thought he. "Only see! A fellow falls into my hands, who, it seems, will do nothing but chatter; if one had only breathing time, thus *extra formam*, speaking academically, in the way of friendly discourse, one could make him confess anything that one liked, without using the rope; he is a man to conduct into prison and examine well, without he himself having any idea of what is going on; and that a man of this description must needs fall into my hands precisely in a moment of anxiety like the present. Ah! there is no means to escape," continued he, listening and inclining his head; "there is no remedy, the day promises to be even stormier than yesterday." What caused him to think this, was an extraordinary noise which was heard in the street; and he could not refrain from opening the window and casting a glance below. He saw that there was a company of citizens, who, when commanded by the patrol to disperse, had, in the beginning, replied with violent language; but who, nevertheless, at last separated themselves, murmuring loudly; and what particularly appeared to the notary a fatal sign, was that the soldiers were

full of politeness towards the populace. He closed the window, and hesitated a moment whether he ought to carry out the enterprise, or, leaving Renzo in the care of the two constables, hasten to inform the Capitano di Giustizia of what had happened. "But," thought he immediately to himself, "they will tell me I am a coward, that I am good for nothing, that I ought to execute the orders given me. I am in for it; so I may as well proceed. Cursed crowd! cursed trade!"

Renzo was already on his legs, the two satellites stood on each side of him. The notary signed to them not to offer him too much violence, and said to his prisoner, "Come, my brave lad, make haste!"

Renzo also heard, saw, and thought. He was now entirely dressed, with the exception of his doublet, which he held in one hand, feeling with the other in the pockets. "Oh!" said he, looking at the notary with a very significant expression of face, "there was money and a letter here, Signor mio!"

"Every thing shall be punctually returned when all these little formalities are executed. Let us go, let us go."

"No, no, no," said Renzo, shaking his head; "this wont do for me. I will have my property, Signor mio. I will render account of my actions; but I will have my property."

"I wish to shew you how much I confide in you; here they are, and make haste," said the notary, taking out of his bosom, and consigning into Renzo's hands, the sequestered articles. Our hero, replacing them where they had been before, muttered between his teeth, "You hold so much converse with thieves,

that you have learned some little of their trade!" The constables could no longer contain themselves, but the notary held them in check with his eyes, saying to himself meantime, "If thou set foot beyond this threshold, thou shalt pay for this with usury—thou shalt pay for it!"

Whilst Renzo put on his doublet, and took his hat, the notary signed to one of the constables to proceed down stairs, sent the prisoner after him, then the other of these good friends, and then followed himself. When they were in the kitchen, whilst Renzo said, "Where has this blessed host hid himself?" the notary gave another sign to the constables, who, seizing hold of Renzo one on either hand, fastened his wrist with certain machines, which, by this hypocritical figure of speech, are called handcuffs. They consisted (we regret thus to be obliged to descend to particulars so unworthy the gravity of history, but perspicuity demands it), they consisted in a small cord, a little longer than would go round an ordinary wrist, with small pieces of wood, like pegs, at the two ends. This cord went round the patient's wrist; and the bits of wood passed between the middle and third finger of the captor's hand, remaining in his grasp, so that, in turning them, he tightened the cord according to his pleasure; and by this means he was enabled, not only to insure the safety of the captured, but also to torture one who might be stubborn; and to this end the cord was full of knots.

Renzo struggled, and cried out, "What treachery is this? to an honest man ——" But the notary, who had his fine speeches ready for every unpleasant event, said, "Have patience. They are only doing their duty.

What would you have? These are all formalities. We even are not able to treat people as our hearts dictate. If we did not do that which we are ordered to do, we should be prettily off, worse even than you! Have patience."

Whilst he spoke thus, the two whose business it was to operate upon him gave a twist to the bits of wood. Renzo plunged like a fiery horse which feels his mouth pressed by his bit, and cried, "Patience!"

"But, my good fellow," said the notary, "this is the true way to get yourself liberated. What would you have? It is a tedious affair, I see that myself; but behaving yourself well, you will have done with it in a moment. And then I see that you are well disposed, and I feel inclined to assist you; I wish to give you yet another piece of advice for your good. Believe me, who am practised in these affairs; go straightforward on your way, without looking here or there, without making yourself remarked; thus no one will attend to you, no one will perceive who it is, and thus you will preserve your honour. In an hour, from this time, you will be at liberty. There is so much to be done, that they will also be in haste to set you free; and then I will speak — you will go about your affairs, and no one will know that you have been in the hands of justice. And you," he continued, turning to the constables with a severe air, "take great care to do him no ill, for he is under my protection; it is necessary that you perform your duty; but recollect that he is an honest and a civil youth, who, in a short time, will again be at liberty, and that he is likely to feel regard for his honour. Proceed in such a manner that no one shall perceive

anything, as though you were three gentlemen going a walk." And in an imperative tone, and with threatening brows, he concluded, "You have understood;" then turning himself to Renzo with a calmed brow, and with a countenance suddenly become smiling, which seemed to say, "Oh, but really we are great friends!" he again whispered to him, "Be prudent, follow directions: proceed collected and calm, confide in those who wish you well; let us be going." And the train moved off.

Renzo, however, did not believe one word of all these beautiful speeches; neither that the notary wished more good to him than to the constables, neither that he had his reputation so much at heart, neither that he felt any inclination to assist him; but he understood very well that this excellent man, fearful that some good occasion of escaping from their hands might present itself in the streets, made these fine proposals, in order to deter him from watching for and profiting by it. Therefore all these exhortations were of no use, except to confirm him in the designs which he had in his head, and to make him do precisely the contrary.

Let no one however conclude from this that the notary was an inexperienced knave and a novice, because he would thus be under a mistake. He was, on the contrary, an arch knave, says our historian, who appears to have been one of his friends, but in this moment his mind was in a state of agitation. I can assure you that in this ordinary state of mind he would have ridiculed any one who, to induce another to commit himself, should have gone and suggested the means, and counselled him so warmly with the

miserable feint of giving him, as a friend, a disinterested piece of advice. But there is a general tendency in men when they are agitated and anxious, and observe that another is able to extricate them from their embarrassment, to demand this assistance earnestly and repeatedly, and under every sort of pretence; and knaves also, when they are in agitation and anxiety, become subject to this general law. Therefore it happens that they in circumstances like the present mostly make such a poor figure. These masterly stratagems, this beautiful cunning with which they are accustomed to come off victorious, which are become to them like a second nature, and which employed in time, and conducted with presence of mind, with the necessary calmness, succeed so well and so secretly,—this cunning which, after a successful result calls forth such universal applause, is adopted in all haste by these poor wretches when they are in great straits, madly, without cleverness or grace; in such a manner too as to cause those who see them thus struggling and striving, to pity and laugh at them; and the one whom they would make their victim, although less crafty than they, discovers their plot, and from their own artifices receives light and turns it against them. Therefore it can never be sufficiently recommended to knaves by profession to preserve always their *sang froid*, or if possible always to remain the stronger party, which after all is the safest plan.

Renzo, therefore, was scarcely arrived in the street, than he began to look about him here and there, to waver his body to the right and left, to listen with both ears. There was not, however, any extraordinary concourse of people in the streets, and yet in

the countenance of more than one passer-by, it was easy to read an indescribable seditious expression, yet every one pursued their way, and properly speaking there was no sedition.

“Be prudent, be prudent!” muttered the notary behind his back; “remember your honour, your honour, my son!” But when Renzo, listening to three men who came up with inflamed countenances, heard them speak of a bakehouse, of concealed flour, of justice, he also began making signs to them, and coughing in a manner which announces quite another thing than a cold. These men regarded this little troop with more attention, and stopped; with them also some others who had just then come up, and others who had gone on before, began to whisper, and turning back brought up the rear.

“Take care of yourself; be prudent, my son, do not spoil your affairs; think of your honour, of your reputation,” murmured the notary. Renzo behaved in a still worse manner. The constables after having consulted each other by glances, thinking to do wisely (every one is liable to err), drew tight the handcuffs.

“Ahi! ahi! ahi!” cried the tortured one; at this cry the people crowded round, they hastened from all sides; the convoy found itself perplexed. “He is a profligate fellow,” whispered the notary to those who surrounded him; “he is a thief, caught in the fact. Retire, allow the officers of justice to pass on.” But, Renzo perceived this fine opportunity, he saw the constables become white, or at least pale. “If I don’t assist myself now, all the worse for me,” thought he. And suddenly he raised his voice. “Good people! they are taking me to prison, because yesterday I

shouted, 'bread and justice.' I have done nothing else. I am an honest man; assist me, do not abandon me, good people!"

A favourable murmur ran through the crowd, then protecting voices raised themselves in reply; at first the constables commanded, then requested, then besought those who were nearest to move away, and make an opening; the mob, however, crowded and pressed round them all the more. The constables at sight of danger, loosened the handcuffs, and only thought how they might lose themselves among the crowd, and get off unobserved. The notary desired ardently to do the same, but this was difficult on account of his black cloak; the poor man, pale and desponding, endeavoured to make himself very, very small. He moved along bending his body, so as to escape out of the crowd; but he could not raise his head, without seeing twenty eyes fixed upon him. He studied in every possible manner to appear a stranger, who, passing by on his way home, had found himself as fast in the crowd, as a straw in the ice; and meeting face to face, with a man who gazed at him intently, with a frown even more threatening than that of the others, he composed his mouth to a smile, and with a silly air, demanded—"what has happened?"

"Ah, raven!" replied he; "Raven, raven!" resounded from all sides. Blows were now added to the cries, so that in a short time, partly by his own legs, partly by the elbows of others, he obtained that which was in this moment the most important to him—a release from this crush.

CHAPTER XVI.

“**ESCAPE, escape, honest man; here is a convent, there is a church! on this side, on that side!**” was shouted to Renzo on all hands. This advice was not necessary, as far as escape was concerned. From the first moment that the hope of freeing himself from these wretches’ clutches had arisen in his mind, he had begun to form his plans, and determined, if successful, to fly, when once at liberty, not only the city, but the duchy. “Because,” thought he, “they have my name written down in their cursed books, let them have come by it in what manner they may; and with my name and surname, they can come and seize me whenever they like.” And as to an asylum, he would not have taken refuge there, unless he had had the constables on his heels. “Because,” thought he to himself, “if I can be a bird of the forest, I will not be a bird of the cage.” Therefore he had chosen, as his place of refuge, that part of the territory of Bergamo where his cousin Bortolo was established, who, if you remember, had already invited him so often to go there. But how to find the way, that was the difficult point. Left in an unknown quarter of a city, with which he might be said to be entirely unacquainted, Renzo did not even know by what gate to depart, in order to proceed to Bergamo; and even had he known this, he would not have known how to get to this gate. For one moment

he thought of inquiring his road from one of his liberators; yet, in the short time left him to meditate upon his affairs, certain ideas had passed through his mind, regarding this very obliging sword-cutler the father of four children, and with very good reason he did not wish to make known his designs to so large a company, among which there might happen to be another friend of the same stamp, and therefore he immediately resolved to depart with all speed, and he could inquire his road in some place where no one would know him, or know wherefore he made this inquiry. He said to his liberators, "many thanks, my good fellows—blessings on you!" and passed on through the opening which was immediately made for him, took to his heels, and away—down an alley, now through a little street, rushing on for some time without knowing where. When it seemed to him he was sufficiently removed, he slackened his pace, so as not to excite suspicion, and began looking here and there to choose some one from whom to procure the information he required, some countenance which should inspire him with confidence. But even here there was a difficulty. The question in itself was suspicious, time pressed; the constables recovered from this little misadventure would doubtless again be on the track of their fugitive; the report of his flight might already have arrived here; and in this multitude, Renzo might perhaps pass ten judgments founded on physiognomy, before finding the countenance that suited him. This great fat man who stood upon the threshold of his shop, with his legs apart, his hands behind him, with his large corporation in front, with his chin in the air, from which hung

a large double-chin, and who, having nothing else to do, alternately raised his large trembling mass upon the points of his toes, and let it fall again upon his heels, had the countenance of a curious talkative fellow, who, instead of giving replies, would have asked questions. The other, who came forward with his eyes fixed and his lips open, far from being able to direct a stranger well and quickly, seemed scarcely to know his own road. The little lad who, to speak the truth, looked marvellously wide awake, looked still more malicious, and probably would have had a foolish delight in sending a poor countryman in the very opposite direction to the one he desired. So true is it that to an embarrassed man every thing is a fresh embarrassment. He at length saw one who came along in haste, and thinking that this person, having probably some pressing affair on hand, would answer him quickly and without more ado, and hearing him talk to himself he imagined he must be a sincere openhearted man, he accosted him, saying, "pray sir, which direction must one take to reach Bergamo?"

"To reach Bergamo? through the Eastern-gate."

"Many thanks; and to arrive at the Eastern-gate?"

"Take the street to the left, you will find yourself in the Cathedral-square, then ——"

"Enough, sir; I know the rest. God reward you!"

And he hastened on in the direction which had been indicated to him. The other looked after him a moment,—and combining in his mind this manner of departure with the question, he said to himself,—
"Either he has done an evil deed, or some one will do evil to him."

Renzo reached the Cathedral-square; he crossed it, passed by a heap of cinders and extinguished coals, and recognised the remains of the bonfire which he had witnessed the day before; he passed along the flight of steps of the cathedral, saw again the bake-house of "the Crutches," half demolished and guarded by soldiers, and hurried on right through the street up which he had come with the mob; arrived at the Capuchin's convent, he cast a glance at the little square and at the door of the church, and said to himself,— "that Friar, however, gave me yesterday a very good piece of advice; telling me to stay and wait in the church, and thus do a little good."

Here, having stopped a moment to observe attentively the gate by which he should issue forth, and seeing there, thus from afar, many people guarding it, and having his imagination somewhat heated (one must pardon him—he had reasons), he felt a certain repugnance to encounter this gateway. Finding thus at hand an asylum, where, with his letter, he would be so well received, he was strongly tempted to enter. But suddenly recovering courage, he thought, "Bird of the forest, as long as is possible. Who knows me? The constables will not have cut themselves into pieces to go and watch for me at all the gates." He turned round to see whether any one was coming from that side; but he saw no one who appeared to occupy himself about him. He went forward; making those good legs, which would always be running when they should only be walking, move slower, and very quietly, whistling in a low voice, he arrived at the gate.

There happened to be, precisely in the gateway, a

number of custom-house officers, and, as a reinforcement, a company of Spanish soldiers; but they were all occupied in guarding the farthest side of the gate, so as to prevent the entrance of those who, hearing of a commotion, should hasten to the city, like ravens to the field of battle; thus Renzo, with an indifferent air, with his eyes cast down, and with a gait between that of a traveller and of one who merely takes a walk, stepped forth without any one accosting him; but inwardly his heart beat violently. Seeing to the right a narrow path, he entered it, so as to avoid the principal road; and proceeded some way before he even turned round.

He travelled on and on; he came upon hamlets and upon villages, he passed by them without asking their names; and certain of removing himself from Milan, he hoped to approach Bergamo; this sufficed for the time being. Sometimes he turned round; sometimes he looked at and rubbed, now one wrist, now the other, for they were still somewhat benumbed, and round them might be seen a red line, the mark of the little cord. His thoughts were, as every one can imagine, a mixture of penitence, of disquiet, of rage, of tenderness; his was a fatiguing study, the endeavouring to comprehend the things said and done the evening before, to discover the secret cause of his miserable fate, and above all, to imagine how they had been able to know his name. His suspicion fell naturally upon the sword-cutler, with whom he remembered to have spoken rather freely. And recollecting in what manner the man had secretly pumped him, his whole behaviour, all his offers, which ended ever in a desire to learn something, his

suspicion became almost a certainty. He had also a confused remembrance of having continued to chat, after the departure of the sword-cutler; but with whom? guess, if thou canst, grasshopper, about what? His memory, much as he might question her, could not inform him; she could only say, that at that time she was not at home. The poor fellow lost himself in this vain search; he was like a man who, having given many a *carte-blanche* to a man whom he considered the very flower of honour, discovers that he is a cheat, and desires to know the state of his affairs; to know what? That all is a chaos. Another painful study of his was to form some design for the future which should please him; those which were not formed of air were all melancholy.

But soon the most difficult thing was to find the road. After travelling on some time, one might say, as chance directed, he saw that by himself he could not again find the right track. He felt however a certain reluctance to pronounce the name of Bergamo, as though this name had something suspicious and strange about it; but nothing else was to be done. He resolved therefore to address himself to the first traveller he met whose physiognomy pleased him; and this he did.

“You are out of the track,” replied the traveller; and then thinking a short time, partly by words, partly by signs, he indicated to him the course which he must pursue in order to reach the high road. Renzo thanking him, did as though he would follow his advice, and really took this direction, intending to approach the road, not to lose sight of it, and travel on by its side as long as was possible, without how-

ever setting foot in it; but this design was easier to conceive than to put into execution. The end was that, proceeding thus from right to left, in a zig-zag manner, following in part the indications which he had received on the way, in part correcting them according to his own ideas and adapting them to his own purpose, and also allowing himself to be guided by the road upon which he found himself, our fugitive had walked perhaps twelve miles when he was not distant more than six from Milan; and as to Bergamo, it was well if he had not moved farther away from it. He began to comprehend that going on after this manner he should never succeed, and resolved to find out some other expedient. The one which occurred to him was to discover through his sagacity the name of some neighbouring village on the frontiers, at which he might arrive by cross-roads, and inquiring after this place he would thus have the road directed without sowing here and there this terrible name of Bergamo, which seemed to him to speak of flight, expulsion, and of some criminal deed.

Whilst he sought the means by which to gain all this information without causing suspicion, he saw a bough hanging before the door of a small house which stood solitary in the outskirts of a village. For some time he had felt the necessity of recruiting his strength increase; he thought this would be the place in which to serve himself in both ways, and entered. Here was only an old woman, with her distaff at her side and spindle in her hand. He asked for something to eat; a little *stracchino** and some good wine were offered him; he accepted the stracchino, but refused

* A kind of soft cheese.

the wine (wine was become hateful to him on account of the joke it had played him the night before); seated himself, and besought the woman to be as quick as she could. She had prepared the table in a moment, and immediately began to storm her guest with questions about himself, and the great events which had taken place at Milan, for the report had reached thus far. Renzo not only knew how to elude these demands with the greatest dexterity, but profiting by this difficulty, he turned to his own advantage the old woman's curiosity, when she asked him where he was going to.

"I have to go to many places," he replied; "and if I find a moment, I should like to stop a short time in that rather considerable village on the road to Bergamo, near the frontier, in the Milanese territory; however—how is it called?"—There will certainly be some such one, thought he to himself.

"Gorgonzola, you would say," replied the old woman.

"Gorgonzola," repeated Renzo, so as to fix the name better in his memory. "Is it far from here?" he continued.

"I do not precisely know; perhaps ten, perhaps twelve miles. If one of my sons were here he could tell you."

"And do you think one could go there by these pleasant little by-paths, without taking the high-road? There is such dust, such terrible dust! It is such a long time that we have had no rain!"

"It seems to me you could; you will be able to ask in the first village you come to on the right." And she named this village to him.

"That is good," said Renzo, rising and taking a piece of bread which had remained over from this meagre repast, a piece of bread very different from the one he had found the day before lying at the foot of the cross of San Dionigi; he paid his bill, went out, directing his course to the right. And not to lengthen our recital more than is necessary, with this name of Gorgonzola on his lips, he travelled on from village to village, and at length arrived about an hour after sunset.

Whilst travelling on he had formed the design of making at Gorgonzola a little halt, and a somewhat more substantial repast. His body would have approved of a bed, but sooner than gratify it in this desire, Renzo would have let it fall dead upon the road. His intention was to inform himself at the hostel of the distance of the Adda, to extract cleverly the knowledge by what by-road he could most easily reach it, and to take this route as soon as he should have refreshed himself. Born and brought up at the second source, so to say, of this river, he had heard it said more than once, that at a certain point and for a certain distance its current marked the confines of the Milanese and Venetian states; of this point and of this distance he had no precise idea, but for the present the most important affair was to cross it wherever it might happen to be. If he should not succeed this day, he was resolved to journey on, as long as the light and his strength would permit him, and then to await the dawn in a field, in a wilderness, or wherever it should please God to place him, provided there were no hostel.

Having taken a few steps in Gorgonzola, he saw a

sign, he entered the hostel, and of the host who came towards him he demanded a mouthful of something to eat and a measure of wine; a few more miles and time had caused this extreme and fanatical hatred of wine to pass away. "I pray you to make haste," he added, "for I am obliged to continue my journey immediately." And this he said not so much because it was the truth, as from fear that the host imagining he wished to sleep there, should come and demand his name and his surname, from whence he came, and upon what business.

The host replied that he should be served immediately, and our hero seated himself at the lower end of the table, near to the door; the place of the humble-minded.

There were seated in this room some idlers of the village, who, after discussing and commenting upon the great news from Milan of the day before, tormented themselves in endeavouring to know how things had gone on this day, all the more industriously as the first news had been more likely to excite than to satisfy their curiosity; a sedition neither subdued nor victorious, suspended rather than terminated by the night, a thing imperfect, the end of an act, rather than of the drama. One of these detached himself from the company, approached the new-comer, and asked whether he came from Milan.

"I?" said Renzo, surprised, thus taking time to reply.

"You, if the question be lawful."

Renzo, shaking his head, pressing his lips together, and making an inarticulate sound proceed from them, said, "Milan, from what I have heard say — must

not be a place to go to at the present time, at least unless pressed by some great necessity."

"Does the uproar then continue to-day?" demanded this curious fellow still more earnestly.

"One must be there, to know that," said Renzo.

"But do not you come from Milan?"

"I come from Liscate," replied the young man quickly, who in the meantime had considered his reply. In fact, in one sense, he did come from Liscate, as he had passed through it, and he had learned the name from a traveller who had pointed this village out to him as the first he must pass, in order to reach Gorgonzola.

"Oh!" said this friend, as though he would say—you had done better to have come from Milan,—but patience. "And at Liscate, do they know nothing of Milan?" he added.

"It is very possible that some one there may know something," replied the mountaineer; "but I have heard nothing."

And these words he pronounced in that peculiar manner, which says, "I have ended." The man returned to his post, and a moment after came the host to lay the cloth.

"How far is it from here to the Adda?" said Renzo, half between his teeth, with a drowsy air, which we have before seen him assume.

"To the Adda—to cross over?" said the host.

"That is—yes—to the Adda."

"Do you wish to pass over the bridge of Cassano, or to cross in the boat at Canonica?"

"Wherever it be—I only ask from curiosity."

"O! I tell you of these places, for they are where

honest people cross, people who can give an account of themselves."

"Good; and where are they?"

"One may reckon, that to one and to the other, more or less, it is six miles."

"Six miles! I did not think it was so much," said Renzo. "But if," he continued, with an air of indifference, which was even carried to affectation, "but if it were necessary to take a shorter cut, there are other places where one could cross?"

"Certainly," replied the host, fixing upon him two eyes full of malicious curiosity. This was sufficient to make the other questions the youth had prepared expire on his lips. He drew his plate before him, and regarding the measure of wine which the host had placed upon the table, he said, "The wine is pure?"

"As gold," said the host; "only ask all the inhabitants of the village and of the neighbourhood, who understand these things, and then you will hear." And saying this, he turned towards the company.

"Cursed be all hosts!" exclaimed Renzo to himself; "the more I know of them, the worse I find them." Notwithstanding, he commenced eating with a good appetite, at the same time listening attentively, without, however, appearing to do so, in order to reconnoitre the land, to learn what was thought in this place of the great event in which he had played no small part, and especially to observe whether among these speakers there were one honest man from whom a poor lad might dare to inquire his road, without the fear of being seized upon, and forced to gossip about his own affairs.

"But!" said one, "it seems this time that the Milanese have wished to do some good. To-morrow, at farthest, something will be known."

"I repent not going to Milan this morning," said another.

"If thou wilt go to-morrow, I will go also," said a third, and then a fourth, and then a fifth.

"What I should like to know," said another, "is, whether these gentlemen of Milan will think of the poor people in the country, or whether they will only have the laws made good for themselves. You know what they are. Proud citizens, they only think of themselves; they treat the country people as though they were not Christians."

"We also have mouths, whether for eating or for letting them know our rights," said another, in a voice as modest as the proposal was daring; "and when the thing is in a fair way——" but he believed it best not to finish his speech.

"It is not alone at Milan that there is concealed grain," commenced another, with a cunning and malicious air, when a horse was suddenly heard to approach. They all ran to the door, and recognising the one who arrived, they went towards him. He was a merchant from Milan, who, going often to Bergamo on matters of trade, was accustomed to pass the night in this hostel; and thus almost always finding there the same company, he became acquainted with them all. They crowded round him; one seized the bridle, another the stirrup. "Welcome! welcome!" they cried.

"Happy to meet you."

"Have you had a good journey?"

"Very good; and you, how have you been?"

“Well, very well. What news do you bring us from Milan?”

“Ah, here is news!” said the merchant dismounting, and leaving his horse with a boy. “But then,” he continued, entering the house with the rest of the company, “by this time you will perhaps know it better than I.”

“Really, we know nothing,” said more than one, laying his hand upon his breast.

“Is it possible?” said the merchant; “then you shall hear good, or rather bad, news. Eh, host! is my customary bed at liberty?—Good. A glass of wine, and my customary mouthful, quick; for I want to go early to bed, so as to depart early to-morrow, and arrive at Bergamo for dinner-time. “And you,” he continued, seating himself at the place opposite to where Renzo sat, silent and attentive, “and you know nothing of all the devilish business of yesterday?”

“O—yesterday—yes!”

“You see then,” replied the merchant, “you know the news. I said that being here always on the watch, to seize upon those who pass——”

“But to-day, how has it gone on to-day?”

“Ah, to-day! Do you nothing of to-day?”

“Entirely nothing; no one has passed.”

“Then let me moisten my lips, and I will tell you about to-day.” He filled his glass, took it in one hand, then with two fingers of the other raised his moustache, then smoothed his beard, drank, and continued; “to-day, my dear friends, little has been wanting to make this as stormy a day as yesterday, and even worse. And it scarcely appears to me real that I am here gossiping with you; because I had

given up all thoughts of travelling, and intended to remain at home to watch over my poor shop."

"What was then the matter?" said one of the listeners.

"A great matter, you shall hear;" and cutting the meat which had been placed before him, and then eating, he continued his relation. The guests, standing on the right and left of the table, listened open-mouthed; Renzo at his post, slowly chewing his last mouthful, without its seeming to be his affair, was more attentive, perhaps, than all the rest.

"This morning, when the rogues who had made all the horrible uproar yesteday, were at the various posts agreed upon, for there was a general understanding—every thing was prepared; they united and recommenced this fine running from street to street, shouting, so as to draw together other people—you know that with these people, it is as when you sweep a house (speaking with all due respect), the heap of dirt increases the farther you advance. When it appeared to them that there were people sufficient, they proceeded towards the Superintendent's house; as though they had not yesterday committed acts of oppression enough. And towards a Signor such as he too! O what villains! And the injurious things they said against him! All inventions! He is an excellent Signor, and very punctual; and I can say this, I who know all his affairs, and I serve him with cloth for his servants' livery. They proceeded then towards this house; you should have seen this mob—these faces! Imagine only, they have passed before my shop; faces that——the Jews of the *Via Crucis* are nothing to them. And the things that issued from

their lips! One must have stopped one's ears, had one not been forced carefully to avoid observation. They went with the full intention of plundering; but ——” And here, raising and stretching forth his left hand, he placed the end of his finger to the point of his nose.

“ But?” said almost all the listeners.

“ But,” continued the merchant, “ they found the street closed up with beams and carts, and behind this barricade a beautiful file of musketeers, with their arquebuses, prepared to receive them as they deserved. When they saw this beautiful preparation —— What would you have done?”

“ Turned back.”

“ Certainly, and this is what they did. But only see whether it was not the devil who conducted them. They are in the Cordusio—they see there the bake-house which they desired to plunder yesterday; and what is done in this shop? Bread is distributed to the customers; and nobles, the very flower of the nobility, are there to see that all goes on properly; but these wretches—they had the devil behind them I tell you, and he set them on—these wretches enter like madmen: ‘ if thou wilt seize on the bread, I will seize on it also;’ in the twinkling of an eye, nobles, bakers, purchasers, bread, counter, benches, troughs, boxes, sacks, bolters, bran, flour, dough, all were topsy-turvy.”

“ And the musketeers?”

“ The musketeers had to guard the Superintendent's house; one cannot sing and bear the cross. This happened in the twinkling of an eye, I tell you; pillage, pillage; all that was good for anything was

taken. And then was again proposed the beautiful invention of yesterday, the carrying the remainder to the square and making a bonfire of it. And already the wretches had begun dragging away all the goods, when one, a greater wretch than the other, proposed — only guess what he proposed?”

“What?”

“To make a pile of every thing in the shop, and to set fire to the pile and the house at once. No sooner was the thing said than done —”

“They have set fire to it?”

“Wait a little. An honest man of the neighbourhood was inspired by heaven. He flies up stairs, he seeks a crucifix, he finds one, he fastens it to the arch of a window; takes from a bed’s-head two holy tapers, lights them, and places them one on each side of the crucifix. The people look up. One must say that in a Milanese there is yet left some fear of God; all retired; the greater part I would say, for there were some devils among them who, to rob, would have set fire to Paradise itself; but, seeing that the mob was not of their opinion, they were obliged to restrain themselves and remain quiet. Guess now, what arrived quite unexpectedly?—all the Monsignori of the cathedral in procession, the cross carried on high, dressed in sacerdotal robes; and Monsignor Mazenta, the arch-priest, began to preach on this side, and Monsignor Setalla, the Penitenziere, on the other side; and then others, here and there, addressed the mob after this fashion: ‘But, good people, what would you do? Is this an example to set your children? Return home. Do you not know that bread is cheap—cheaper than before? But go and see, there is the notice pasted up on the corners.’”

“ Was this true ? ”

“ The devil ! Would you have Monsignori of the cathedral come in their grand robes to tell lies ? ”

“ And what did the people do ? ”

“ By little and little the mob dispersed ; they ran to the corners of the street, and there, for those who could read, stood the list of prices. Only guess ! a loaf of eight ounces for a penny ! ”

“ What luck ! ”

“ The vine is beautiful, provided that its fruitfulness continues. Do you know how much flour has been wasted yesterday and this morning ? Enough to support the duchy for two months. ”

“ And has no good law been made for those who live out of Milan ? ”

“ What has been done at Milan regards only the city itself. I do not know what to say to you ; for you, there will be what God gives you. The uproar has entirely ceased now. I have not told you all ; now comes the good. ”

“ Is there yet something more ? ”

“ It is this, that yesterday evening or this morning several of the ringleaders have been taken, and it was quickly known that the principal ones will be hanged. Hardly had this report begun to spread, than every one hastened home the nearest road, so as not to run the risk of being among the number. Milan, when I set out, resembled a convent of friars. ”

“ But will they really be hanged ? ”

“ Certainly, and that quickly, ” replied the merchant.

“ And what will the people do ? ” demanded again he who had asked the former question.

"The people! they will go and see them hanged," returned the merchant. "They are so fond of seeing a Christian die in the open air, that they wanted—the scoundrels—to kill the Superintendent! Instead of that they will now have four miserable creatures served up with all formality, accompanied by Capuchins and the brothers of the Good Death;* and these are people who have deserved such a fate. This is a providential thing; you see it was a necessary thing. They had already begun to enter shops and help themselves; if this had been allowed to continue, after the bread would have come the turn of the wine, and so on ——— You can think, whether of their own accord they would have given up so convenient an usage. And I can tell you that for a worthy man who keeps open shop, this was no very agreeable thought."

"Truly not," said one of his auditors. "Truly not," repeated the others with one voice.

"And," continued the merchant, wiping his beard upon the cloth, "this had been prepared for a long time; there was a league, you know?"

"There was a league?"

"There was a league. This was all a cabal formed by the Navarrini, by this Cardinal of France you know, who has a half-Turkish name, and who every day forms some new plot to spite the Spanish crown. But he aims most especially at Milan, for he sees, the rogue, that there lies the king's greatest strength."

"Really!"

"Should you like a proof? Those who have made

* *Buona Morte*. A fraternity of the same name still exists in the south of France.

the greatest disturbance were foreigners; there were countenances in the street, which had never been seen before in Milan. I have forgotten to tell you something which has been told me as a fact. The officers of justice had seized one in a public-house ——” Renzo, who had not lost a syllable of this discourse, when this chord was touched, felt himself grow cold, and gave a shiver before he was able to think of restraining himself. No one, however, noticed it; and the narrator, without breaking the thread of his relation, added: “it is not yet known from whence he came, by whom he was sent, neither what sort of a man he was; but certainly he was one of the chief ringleaders. Yesterday, in the midst of the uproar, he had played the devil; and then, not satisfied with this, he had set himself to propose a fine thing, that they should murder all the nobles. The rascal! How would the poor live, if the nobles were murdered? The officers of justice, who had watched him, laid hands upon him; they found on him a packet of letters, and they conducted him to prison; but what happened? His companions, who watched round the hostel, came in great numbers, and liberated him, the villain!”

“And what has become of him?”

“It is not known; he will have escaped or concealed himself in Milan! there are people who have neither house nor home, and who yet find everywhere lodging and concealment, so long as the devil can and will aid them; they fall, however, into the snare, when they least expect it; for when the pear is ripe, it must fall. It is known for certain that the letters have remained in the officers’ hands, and that in them the

whole of the cabal is described, and it is said that many persons will be compromised. The worse for them; they have wished to turn Milan topsy-turvy, and even worse. People say that the bakers are rogues, I know that myself, but they must be hanged according to justice. There is grain concealed. Who does not know it? But it is for those who command to keep good spies, and go and disinter it, and send the dealers to dangle their heels in the air in company with the bakers. And if those who are in command do nothing, it is for the city to remonstrate; and if at first no attention is paid, remonstrate again; so that by much remonstrance they may obtain what they want, and not have recourse to such a rascally usage as that of entering shops and warehouses to plunder."

The little that Renzo had eaten was turned to poison. It seemed to him a thousand years before he should be out of the room, and at some distance from this inn and the village; and already more than ten times he had said to himself, "go, go." But the fear of causing suspicion now much increased, and become the tyrant of his thoughts, had held him fast on the bench. In this perplexity, he thought that this everlasting talker must certainly sometime finish speaking of him, and he determined to move off as soon as he should hear some other subject introduced.

"And it is on this account," said one of the company, "that I, knowing the way these things go on, and that honest folk are not well off in these tumults, have not allowed myself to be conquered by my curiosity, and have remained at home."

"And I? Have I stirred?" said another.

"I," added a third, "had I by chance found myself

at Milan, I should have left unfinished my affairs, and have returned immediately to my home. I have a wife and children, and to speak the truth, these uproars do not please me."

At this point the host, who had placed himself to listen, went towards the other end of the table to see what the stranger was about. Renzo seized the opportunity, he called the host to him by a sign, asked for his bill, paid it without cheapening, although his money was very low, and without farther discourse walked straight to the door, passed over the threshold, and under the guidance of Providence moved off in the opposite direction to that by which he had come.

CHAPTER XVII.

ONE desire is often sufficient to torment a man ; imagine then, what he must suffer subjected to two at once, each one at war with the other ! Poor Renzo, already for many hours, had been possessed by two such desires—the desire of flight and the desire of keeping himself concealed, and the unfortunate words of this merchant had strangely increased both one and the other. His adventure then had excited attention, they desired to get hold of him by any means : who knew how many constables were ready to give chase to him ? Who knew how many orders had been given to search after him in the villages and inns, and on the roads ?

At length, however, he thought that the only constables who knew him were two, and that fortunately he did not carry his name written on his brow ; but many stories, which he had heard related of fugitives stopped and discovered through strange combinations of circumstances, by their gait, their suspicious air, and other unimagined signs, passed through his mind ; all this excited his uneasiness. Although the *Ave Maria* rang as he left Gorgonzola, and the increased darkness diminished these dangers still more and more, he chose, much against his will, the high-road, proposing to himself to strike into the first path which should seem to conduct him to the point he

desired to reach. At first, he encountered a few travellers; but, his imagination filled with these ugly apprehensions, he had not the courage to stop any one and inquire his way. "He said six miles—this man!" thought he to himself; "if out of the regular road these six should become eight or ten, these legs which have walked thus far will walk the rest of the way. I am not going towards Milan, that is certain; therefore I am going towards the Adda. Travel on and on, and sooner or later I shall arrive there. The Adda has a loud voice; and when I shall have arrived in her neighbourhood, I shall no longer require any one to direct me. If there happen to be any boat in which I can cross the river, I will cross immediately; should it be otherwise, I will wait until morning, in a field, on the grass, like the sparrows; better lie on the grass than in prison."

Very soon he saw a small pathway open to the left; he entered it. Had he met any one at this hour, he would no longer have been so ceremonious about inquiring his way, but he saw no living soul. He therefore went where the path conducted him, and thought—"I play the devil! I assassinate all the *Signori*! A packet of letters! *My* companions who were keeping watch! I would give something to find myself face to face with this merchant on the other side of the Adda (ah, when I shall only have crossed this blessed Adda!), then to stop him, and demand politely where he had obtained all this beautiful information. Know now, my dear sir, that it happened so and so, and that my playing the devil consisted in my assisting Ferrer, as though he had been my brother; know that these rogues, who to

believe you were my friends, wished to play me an ugly trick, because I, in a certain moment, spoke to them like a good Christian; know that, whilst you were busy guarding your shop, I got my ribs squeezed in order to save your Signor Vicar of provisions, whom I had before neither seen nor known. You may wait for my putting myself out of the way to assist Signori again. It is true, one must do this to save one's soul; they are also our neighbours, these Signori. And as to the great packet of letters about which there was all this stir, and which you know for certainty is now in the hands of the officers of justice, let us bet that I make it appear here, without the help of the devil? Are you curious to see this packet? Here it is. One single letter! Yes, sir, one single letter; and this letter, if you wish to know it, was written by a religious man who could instruct you in every kind of learning whatsoever; a religious man, a single hair of whose beard is worth more than the whole of yours; and this letter is written, as you see, to another religious man, also a man who — Only see now who are the rascals, my friends. Learn how to speak another time, particularly when it concerns your neighbour."

But after some time, these thoughts and similar ones entirely ceased; present circumstances wholly occupied the faculties of the poor pilgrim. The fear of being pursued and discovered, which during the day had embittered his journey so much, no longer annoyed him; but how many other things rendered this nocturnal journey still more wearisome! The gloom, the solitude, and his ever-increasing and painful fatigue. There blew a chill breeze, steady

and keen; a breeze not very likely to be agreeable to one who still wore the same garments he had put on to be married in, intending immediately after the ceremony to return home in triumph. This was certainly not very agreeable, but to increase his miseries, there was this travelling on as chance directed, or rather this groping about, in search of a place of repose and security.

When he passed through a village, he walked on very, very slowly, looking about, however, to see whether there were any door still open, but the only sign he perceived of people being yet up was here and there some light streaming through a window. When he had left the hamlet behind him, he would stop every now and then, and listen if he could hear the voice of the Adda, but in vain. He heard no other sound than the yelling of dogs which proceeded from some solitary cottage, travelling through the air at once plaintive and menacing. Upon his approach to some one of these cottages, this yell would change itself into an animated and furious bark, and passing before the door he heard, and almost saw, the animal with his nose at the sill of the door, redoubling his noise—a circumstance which removed the temptation of knocking and demanding shelter. And perhaps even without the dogs, he would not have been able to resolve upon this step. “Who is there?” will be the answer, he thought; “what do you want at this hour? How are you come here? Let us know who you are? Are there no inns where you could pass the night?” This is the best answer I shall receive if I knock; even should no coward sleep there, who should immediately commence crying, ‘help, thieves!’

One must have something explicit to give in reply—and what reply can I give? People who hear a noise at night never imagine anything but thieves, profligates, ambuscades; they never think that an honest man may find himself on the highway at night, unless he be a gentleman in his carriage. On this account, therefore, he determined only to have recourse to this at the very last extremity, and pushed forward in the hope of at least discovering the Adda, if not of crossing it this same night, and thus not be again obliged to seek the river in broad daylight.

He walked on and on, and arrived where the cultivated country died away into a plain, scattered over with fern and broom. This appeared to him, if not a sign, at least an argument in favour of his approach to the river, he advanced along the plain, following a path which traversed it. Having taken a few steps, he stopped to listen, but again in vain. The weariness of the journey was increased by the savage character of the scenery, where no longer was seen a single walnut-tree, a vine, nor any one of those other signs of cultivation which in the commencement of his journey had been for him a kind of half companionship. He continued still to advance, and as certain images and apparitions began to haunt him, apparitions called forth by the tales he had heard related when a child, he, in order to expel or pacify them, commenced reciting the prayers for the dead; and thus he pursued his way.

By degrees he found himself among shrubs of a greater height, among plum-trees and dwarf-oaks. Still advancing, and lengthening his strides with more

impatience than joy, he began to perceive among the low bushes, here and there, a tree, and pursuing the same path, he reached a wood. He felt a certain repugnance to advance into it, but conquering the sentiment, he proceeded much against his will, but the farther he advanced, the more his repugnance increased, the more did every object excite his uneasiness. The trees which he saw in the distance presented to his excited imagination strange, deformed, and monstrous shapes; the shadows of the agitated tree-tops, which trembled on the pathway, illuminated, as it was, here and there, by the moonlight, annoyed him; even in the rustling of the dry leaves which he trampled under foot, there was for his ear something indescribably hateful. His legs were impelled forward, whilst, at the same time, they appeared scarcely able to support his body. He felt the night-breeze blow still more cold and sharp against his brow and cheeks, he felt it penetrate between his garments and his flesh, stiffening them, and reaching even his bones, which already ached with weariness, thus extinguishing the last remains of vigour. At one moment this antipathy, this indefinite horror, against which his mind had combated some time, appeared as though it would at once overpower him. He was on the point of losing his senses; but terrified by his own fear more than by anything else, he recalled his former courage, and was determined that this should rule him. Thus having for a moment strengthened himself, he stood still to deliberate, and resolved immediately to leave this wood by the path along which he had just come, to return straight to the last village through which he had passed, to find

himself again among human beings, and to seek shelter even at the inn. Whilst he thus stood deliberating, the rustling of his feet among the leaves ceased, all was silent around him, and he for the first time heard a sound, a murmuring of flowing water. He listened, was certain; and exclaimed, "It is the Adda!" It was to him like the discovery of a friend, of a brother, of a saviour. His weariness vanished, his pulse returned, he felt his blood flow freely and warmly through all his veins, he felt his confidence increase, and in a great degree the uncertainty and horror of the surrounding objects vanished, he no longer hesitated to advance farther into the forest, and pressed on towards this friendly murmur.

He arrived in a few moments at the extremity of the plain, upon the edge of a steep precipice; and looking below, he saw between the bushes which clothed the shore, the waters sparkling and flowing onward. Then raising his eyes he perceived the vast plain of the opposite shore, scattered over with hamlets, and beyond, the hills, upon one of which he distinguished a large whitish spot which seemed to him must be a town, no doubt Bergamo. He descended the declivity a little way, and separating the bushes and brambles with his hands and arms, he looked below whether any friendly bark were moving on the river; he listened for the stroke of oars, but he neither heard nor saw anything. Had this been a river less considerable than the Adda, Renzo would immediately have descended and attempted to ford it; but he knew very well that the Adda was not a stream to be too confidently trusted in.

Therefore he began deliberating with great cool-

ness upon the course to pursue. To lie down on the grass and wait there for the dawn, for the next six hours perhaps, with this breeze, with this hoar frost, and thus lightly clothed, was certainly more than sufficient to benumb him. To walk to and fro all this time, besides being but a poor defence against the rigour of the night air, was demanding too much from those poor legs which had already done more than their duty. He recollected to have seen in one of the fields nearest to the heath, one of those huts covered with straw, constructed of branches and tree trunks, and then plastered over with mud, in which the Milanese peasants are accustomed in summer to deposit their harvest, and whither they repair to watch it; during the remainder of the year these huts are abandoned. This then he immediately chose as his hostel; he again struck into the pathway, traversed again the wood, the thicket, the heath, and walked on towards the hut. A wormeaten and disconnected door, without either key or bolt, had fallen backwards; Renzo pulled it aside, entered, and saw a hurdle suspended in the air, supported by boughs, after the fashion of a hammock, but he did not trouble himself to mount up into it. He saw some straw lying upon the ground, and thought that even there a quiet sleep would be very delightful.

Before he lay down upon this bed which Providence had prepared for him, he fell upon his knees to return thanks for this blessing, and for all the assistance he had received throughout this terrible day. He then repeated his customary prayers, and besought pardon from God for not having said them the night before; or, to use his own words, for having gone to sleep

like a dog, and even worse than a dog. "And it was for this," added he, then to himself, preparing to lie down, "it was for this that I had such a beautiful awakening this morning." He collected all the straw which lay around him and covered himself with it, making of it as well as he could a sort of coverlet, so as to protect himself from the cold, which even within the hut made itself pretty sharply felt, and then huddled himself together under this straw with the intention of enjoying a good sleep, which it appeared to him he had bought more dearly than was needful.

But scarcely had he closed his eyes, than in his memory, or in his imagination—I am unable to indicate the precise spot—there commenced such a coming and going to and fro of people, in such crowds, and so incessantly, that it was adieu to sleep. The merchant, the notary, the constables, the sword-cutler, the host, Ferrer, the vicar, the company in the inn, the tumult in the street, then Don Abbondio, then Don Rodrigo; in short, all people with whom Renzo had something to do.

Three figures alone presented themselves unaccompanied by any bitter memory, free from every suspicion, amiable in every respect; and two images in particular, though differing much from each other, were closely united in the young man's heart—a tress of black hair and a white beard. But the pleasure which this thought excited was far from being pure and calm. Thinking of the good Friar, he felt still more acutely shame, for his escapades, for his disgusting intemperance, for the fine use he had made of the fatherly advice this good man had given him; and contemplating Lucia's image, we will not attempt

to say what he felt; the reader knows the circumstances, he can imagine his feelings. And this poor Agnese, how could he have forgotten her? This Agnese who had chosen him, who had already considered him as one with her daughter, and who, since she had received from him the title of mother, had assumed a mother's language and heart, demonstrating her earnestness by deeds. But another sorrow, and not the least bitter one, was the thought that precisely owing to these kind intentions, to her having wished so well to him, the poor woman should now find herself driven from her home, a fugitive and uncertain of the future; and that she should now, by the very circumstance from which she had hoped to derive the repose and comfort of her last years, draw upon herself toil and suffering. Poor Renzo, what a night! This which should have been the fifth after his marriage! What a chamber! What a nuptial couch! After what a day!

"God's will be done," exclaimed he, as his thought became ever more sorrowful and vexatious—"God's will be done. He knows what happens. He watches over us. I accept all as penance for my sin. Lucia is so good! the Almighty will not permit her to suffer long, very long!"

Occupied with these thoughts he despaired of ever falling asleep, and the cold becoming insupportable, he shivered, and his teeth chattered; he sighed for the approach of day, and measured with impatience the slow course of the hours. I say measured, because he heard every half-hour the striking of a distant clock resounding through the vast silence; I imagine this must have been the clock at Trezzo. The first

time that this sound fell upon his ear, thus unexpectedly, and without his being able to form any idea from whence it came, it caused a mysterious and solemn sensation, like an admonition proceeding from an unseen person, in an unknown voice.

When the hammer had struck eleven strokes,* which was the hour Renzo had fixed upon for his departure, he rose benumbed, fell upon his knees, and repeated with more than customary fervour his morning devotions, then stood up, stretched his arms and legs, shook his person, as though to put together all his members, which seemed inclined each one alone to act for itself, blew first into one hand, then into the other, rubbed them, and opened the door of the hut; gave a glance here and there, to see whether there were any one about, and seeing no one, sought with his eye the pathway of the evening before, immediately recognised it, and set forth.

The sky gave promise of a fine day; the setting moon, pale and without beams, shone in the immense field of grey azure, which gradually towards the horizon faded away into a pale rose. Along the horizon in irregular masses extended clouds of brown and azure hues, the lower ones edged with a streak of fire, which every moment became brighter and more distinct; towards the south, other heaped-up clouds, light, and ever changing, illuminated the heavens with a thousand nameless colours; it was in short this heaven of Lombardy, so beautiful when it is beautiful, so splendid, so calm. If Renzo had been

* Formerly, and even at the present day in certain parts of Italy, the whole four-and-twenty hours are counted. The first hour was that which preceded the night, thus in winter their eleven would correspond with our four in the morning.

there walking for his pleasure, he would most certainly have looked upwards, and admired this dawn, so different from that which he was accustomed to see among his mountains; but he gazed upon his road, and hastened on with long strides, in order to warm himself, and arrive quickly. He again passed the field, the heath, the bushes; he traversed the wood, looking around him, laughing at himself, and feeling at the same time inwardly ashamed of the terror he had experienced there but a few hours before; he is now arrived upon the river's edge, he looks below; and between the branches he perceives a fisher's little boat, which slowly moves forward against the stream, keeping close to this bank. He immediately descends by the shortest path through the brambles, and now stands close to the river; he calls in a low voice to the fisherman, and intending merely to appear as though he asked but a favour of small moment, he, without being aware of it himself, signs to him to approach with a half-supplicating air. The fisher casts a glance along the shore, gazes attentively along the water which flows towards him, turns round to gaze along the water which has hastened past him, directs his prow towards Renzo, and reaches him. Renzo, who stood on the edge of the shore, almost with one foot in the water, seized the prow of the boat, leaped in and said: "Will you do me the favour of putting me over to the other side? I will pay you for it." The fisher having divined his desire, had already turned his boat in this direction. Renzo perceived another oar lying in the boat, and stooped to take it.

"Gently, gently," said the fisher, but then observing with what address the youth had seized upon the

instrument, and with how much skill he was preparing to manage it, he added, "ah, ah! you understand the trade."

"A little," replied Renzo; and he commenced rowing with a vigour and skill which was that of no amateur. Without ever slackening his exertions he cast every now and then a gloomy glance towards the shore from which they were hastening, and a glance of impatience towards the one whither they were borne. Renzo was in an agony at not being able to proceed more quickly, for the current was in some places too rapid for them to pass straight across; and the boat, partly opposing, partly following the stream of water, was obliged to pursue a diagonal course. In all affairs which are somewhat perplexing, the difficulties present themselves at first in a mass; but when the time for action arrives, they start up one by one in an endless succession. Thus it was with Renzo. Now that the Adda might almost be said to be passed, his being uncertain whether here the river served as the boundary line between the two states caused him much uneasiness, as did also the fear that even should this obstacle be overcome, there might still remain for him some other to surmount. He called therefore to the fisherman, and motioning with his head towards this white spot which he had perceived the preceding night, and which now was much more distinct, he said, "Is that place Bergamo?"

"The town of Bergamo," replied the fisherman.

"And this shore, does it belong to Bergamo?"

"It is the territory of San Marco."

"Long live San Marco!" exclaimed Renzo. The fisherman said nothing.

At length they touch this shore; Renzo throws himself out of the boat; he inwardly returns thanks to God, and with his lips expresses his gratitude to the boatman. He puts his hand into his pocket and draws forth a berlinga, which, considering the circumstances, was no small generosity, and offers it to this brave man, who, having again cast a glance towards the Milanese shore, and looked up and down the river, stretches forth his hand, takes the money, puts it into his pocket, then compresses his lips and places his forefinger across them, accompanying this gesture with an expressive glance, and then saying, "a good journey to you," he turns back.

In order that the ready and obliging courtesy of this man towards a stranger should not be unintelligible to the reader, we must inform him that this man, often besought by smugglers and outlaws, was accustomed to render them similar services, not so much on account of the small and uncertain profit that might thus accrue to him, as through fear of making himself enemies among these two classes. He rendered this service, I say, whenever he could be sure of not being seen by custom-house officers, constables, or spies. Thus, without wishing more good to one class than to the other, he endeavoured to satisfy all, by exercising that impartiality which is the usual characteristic of those who are obliged to act with one party and render account of their actions to another.

Renzo stopped a moment to contemplate the opposite shore, that earth which but so short a time before had seemed to burn under his feet. "Ah! here I am, safely out of it," was his first thought. "Rest there,

cursed land," was his second, his farewell to his country. But his third carried him back to those he left behind. Then he folded his arms upon his breast, heaved a sigh, cast his eyes upon the water which flowed at his feet, and thought—"it has passed under the bridge!" For thus, according to the manner of his country, he called the one at Lecco. "Ah, infamous world! enough; God's will be done!"

He turned his back upon these sorrowful objects, and set forth on his farther travel, taking for his guiding point the whitish spot upon the mountain slope, until he should find some one from whom he might inquire the proper road. You really ought to have seen with what an easy air he accosted the passers-by, and how he named, without any evasion, the village in which his cousin resided. From the first traveller to whom he referred, he had learned that there yet remained nine miles for him to walk.

This journey was not agreeable. Without speaking of the woes which Renzo carried along with him, sorrowful objects excited his sympathy every moment, objects which must have informed him that he would find in this country which he was about to enter, poverty such as he had left in his own. All along the road, and even still more in the villages and hamlets, he encountered beggars at every step, not beggars by profession, but from necessity, and they exhibited misery more in their countenances than in their garments; there were peasants, mountaineers, artisans, whole families together; and there was heard a confused hum of prayers, lamentations, and cries. This sight, besides exciting his compassion and melancholy, recalled his own affairs.

“Who knows,” he meditated, “whether I shall find anything to do? Whether there will be work as in the past years? But enough, Bortolo wishes me well; he is a good fellow; he has made money, he has often invited me to come to him, he will not abandon me. And then Providence has assisted me until the present time; Providence will assist me in the future.”

Meanwhile his appetite, which had already been aroused some time, was increased by every mile; and although Renzo felt, as soon as he began to pay any attention to it, that he should be able, without great inconvenience, to restrain it during the two or three miles which yet remained, still he considered that it would not be well to present himself before his cousin like a beggar, and say to him, as his first compliment, “Give me to eat.” He drew forth from his pocket all his fortune, and counted it in his hand. This was no account to require a great arithmetician; however, there was enough wherewith to make a little feast. He entered a public-house to refresh himself; and in fact, having paid his bill, there still remained a few pence over.

Going forth, he saw, so close to the door that he had nearly stumbled over them, two women reclining rather than sitting on the earth, one aged, the other younger, with an infant which, after in vain having sucked first at one breast and then at the other, cried most bitterly; all bore the hue of death; near them stood a man, in whose countenance and limbs might still be discovered the traces of former vigour; a vigour now humbled and exhausted by long fasting. All the three stretched out their hands towards

Renzo, who issued forth with a free step and reanimated air; not one spoke; what more could a prayer have said?

“Here is an alms,” said Renzo, and thrust his hand into his pocket, brought forth these pieces of money, placed them in the hand nearest to him, and pursued his way.

This repast, and this good action (for we are composed both of soul and body) had comforted him, and enlivened his thoughts. In truth, after having been thus dispossessed of his last remaining money, he was inspired with a greater confidence in Providence than if he had found ten times the sum. For, if, in order this day to support these unfortunate people, Providence had held in reserve the last pence of a stranger, of a fugitive, who himself was also uncertain of his means of livelihood, how could he then believe that Providence would abandon the one she had thus made use of, the one whom she had inspired with such a lively confidence in herself, with such a resolute and beneficial confidence? Such were pretty nearly the thoughts of our youth, although perhaps even less clearly expressed than we have here given them. During the remainder of his journey, meditating upon his affairs, all seemed to explain itself. The famine must have an end; there is a harvest every year; in the meanwhile, he had his cousin Bortolo and his own skill; and besides, at home he had a little money which he would have sent immediately to him. With this, even at the worst, he could exist from day to day until abundance should return. “And then abundance having at length returned,” continued Renzo in his imagina-

tion, "the heat of trade recommences; the masters contend with each other in procuring Milanese workmen, for it is they who best understand their business; the Milanese workmen hold their heads high; those who will have able workmen must pay for them; there may be earned more than enough for one person, there will be something that may be laid aside; and I can get some one to write the women word to come —— And then, why wait at all? Is it not true that with this little hoard we should have managed to exist together at Lecco, even through this winter? We can exist here just as well. There are curates everywhere. Then let these two dear women come; we will keep house here. What pleasure it would be to walk along this road all together! To go as far as the Adda in a cart, to take some refreshment on the bank, upon the bank itself, to shew these dear creatures the place where I have embarked, the wild plum-tree by which I descended, the point where I stood to look out for a boat."

At length he arrived at his cousin's village. Entering, nay, even before he had set foot in the street, he observed a very tall house with a more than usual number of very high windows, he recognised in it a silk-manufactory, entered it, and amidst the roar of wheels and falling water, demanded in a loud voice, whether a certain Bortolo Castagneri lived there.

"The Signor Bortolo? There he is."

"*Signor?* a good sign," thought Renzo; he sees his cousin, he flies towards him. The cousin turns round, recognises the youth, and says, "Here I am." There is an "Oh!" of surprise, a raising of arms, a falling on each other's neck. After this reception,

Bortolo draws aside our youth into a chamber, far from the noise of the machinery and the eyes of the curious, and says to him, "I am most happy to see thee, but thou art a strange fellow. I have invited thee so often, and thou wouldst never come; now thou art arrived in a somewhat critical moment."

"Why, if I must tell thee, I am not come away now by my own free will," said Renzo; and then with much brevity, but not without much emotion, he recounted his sad history.

"That's another affair," said Bortolo. "O poor Renzo! But thou hast counted on me, and I will not abandon thee. Truly at the present time no one runs after workmen; people can scarcely keep on their own, in order not to lose them and interrupt business; but our master wishes me well, and has money. And in great part he owes it to me, I can tell thee, without praising myself; he has capital, and I have ability. Dost thou know I am his first workman? And then I must tell thee I am his factotum. Poor Lucia Mondella! I recollect her as though it were but yesterday—a good girl! Always the most modest in the church; and when one passed by her little cottage——I seem to see this little cottage just out of the village, with a beautiful fig-tree growing beside the wall——"

"No, no, don't let us speak of it."

"I would say that whenever one passed this cottage one always heard her reel, which spun round, and round, and round. And this Don Rodrigo! Already in my time he had commenced his evil courses. But now, for as much as I see, he will play the devil outright, until God shall lay the bridle on his neck. As

I have told thee we begin to suffer here somewhat from famine,—and by-the-bye, how is it with thy appetite?”

“I have eaten a short time since on my way.”

“And how is it with thy money?”

“Renzo opened one hand, brought it near his mouth and blew into it.”

“That does not matter,” said Bortolo; “I have plenty. Very soon things will alter, God willing thou canst repay me, or lay by for thyself.”

“I have something at home, and I will have it sent.”

“That is good. In the meantime draw upon me. God has been good towards me, in order that I may do good; and if I do not do good to my relations and friends, to whom ought I?”

“Have I not said that Providence would assist me!” exclaimed Renzo, pressing affectionately his good cousin’s hand.

“Well then,” replied the other, “they have made all this uproar in Milan. They seem to me rather like fools, these people. The report had already reached us. But I should like thee to relate me the affair more minutely. Ah! we have plenty to talk about. Here, however, thou seest things go on somewhat better, and affairs are managed with more judgment. The town has purchased two thousand *some* of corn from a merchant who is at Venice. This is corn which comes from Turkey; but when eating is concerned, people are not so dainty. Now hear what happened, it happened that the governors of Verona and Brescia closed the means of communication, and said; no grain shall be exported from here. What

do the people of Bergamo? They send to Venice, Lorenzo Torre, a doctor, but one good for something! He set off in haste, and presented himself to the Doge, and said, ‘only think what an idea is this that the governors have got in their heads?’ It is such a speech they say, such a speech, a speech to be printed! That is having a man who knows how to speak. And immediately an order was issued that the corn should be allowed to pass; and the governors not only allow it to pass, but are obliged to give it escort, and the corn is now on its way. And the country has also been considered. Giovanbatista Biava, ambassador from Bergamo at Venice (an excellent man also), has given the senate to understand that the famine is felt in the country; and the senate has granted us four thousand *staia* of millet. Even this helps to make bread. And then, if we cannot eat bread, we will live upon meat. The Lord has given me property, as I have told thee. Now I will conduct thee to my master; he has often heard thee spoken of, and will give thee a good reception. He is a thorough Bergamascan of the old sort, a man with a large heart. Certainly he did not expect thee just now; but when he has heard thy story—— And then he knows how to value workmen, for the famine passes away, and business lasts. But first of all, I must inform thee of something. Dost thou know what they call us Milanese in this country?”

“What do they call us?”

“They call us *baggiani*” (simpletons).

“That is not a nice name.”

“What matters it? Whoever is born in the Milanese, and desires to live in the territory of Ber-

gamo, must receive it quietly. For these people address simpleton to a Milanese, as we should *illustrissimo* to a gentleman."

"They say it, I imagine, to those who will allow them."

"My good lad, if thou art not disposed to endure the simpleton, thou hadst better not count upon living here. Thou wouldst always be obliged to carry thy knife in thy hand, and even; let us suppose that thou hast killed two, three, or even four fellows, one would come at last and kill thee; and then what a pleasure it would be to appear before God's tribunal with three or four homicides upon thy soul!"

"And a Milanese, who should have a little——" and here he struck his forehead with his finger, as he had done in the full moon. "I would say one who knows something of his business?"

"All the same, here he is also a simpleton. Dost thou know how my master speaks of me when he talks with his friends? This simpleton has been sent by God to benefit my business; if I had not this simpleton I should be badly off. This is the custom."

"It is a foolish custom, and particularly when they know what we can do. And after all, who is it that has brought here these arts, and set them going? No one but us. Is it possible that this has not brought them to reason?"

"At present it has not; with time, perhaps it may. The children perhaps may change; but for the men grown there is no remedy; they have contracted the bad habit; they will not lay it aside. After all, what is it? The trifles thy country people have done and would do for thee, is quite another thing."

“Certainly, that’s true; if there is no other evil
——”

“Well, now that thou art persuaded of this, all will go on well. Come to the master, and be of good courage.”

And in fact all did go on well; the promises of Bortolo were realised. There was really Providence at work, for we shall see directly how little was to be hoped from the property and money which Renzo had left at home.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THIS same day, the 13th of November, there arrived a courier extraordinary at the house of the Signor Podestà of Lecco, who presented him with a despatch from the Signor Captain of the Police, containing orders to make every possible and necessary inquiry, whether a certain young man, named Lorenzo Tramaglino, a silk-weaver, who had escaped from the hands, *prædicti egregii domini capitanei*, were returned, *palam vel clam*, to his village *ignotum* precisely which, *verum in territorio Leuci*.

Quod si compertum fuerit sic esse, the Signor Podestà shall exert all his efforts, *quanta maxima diligentia fieri poterit*, to lay hold of him, and after having well bound him, *videlicet*, with good hand-cuffs, he shall have him conducted to prison, and there keep him under good and sure custody until he shall be consigned into the hands of those sent to fetch him, *accedatis ad domum prædicti Laurentii Tramaliini; et facta debita diligentia, quidquid ad rem repertum fuerit auferatis; et informationes de illius prava qualitate, vita, et complicibus sumatis*; and of all that shall have been done and said, found and not found, taken and left, *diligenter referatis*.

The Signor Podestà, after having been assured by all human means that the subject of the despatch was not returned to his home, sends for the consul of

the village, and is conducted by him, accompanied by a numerous train of notaries and constables, to the fugitive's house. The house is locked up, and the one who has the key is either not there, or does not let himself be found. The door is broken in, the usual careful search is made, that is to say the house is treated as though it were besieged. The report of this expedition immediately spreads itself throughout the neighbourhood, and soon reaches the ears of Father Cristoforo, who, astonished no less than afflicted, questions this person and that, in order to learn something of the cause of an event thus unexpected; but he only gathers wild conjectures, and immediately writes to Father Bonaventura, from whom he hopes to receive some more precise intelligence. Meanwhile the friends and relatives of Renzo are cited to depose all they know regarding his *prava qualitate*; to bear the name of Tramaglino is a misfortune, is a disgrace, a crime; the whole village is in a commotion. By degrees it begins to be known that Renzo has escaped from the officers of justice in the very heart of Milan, and then has disappeared; there are rumours that he has done something terrible, but people are not able to say what the thing is, or they relate it in a hundred ways. The less terrible it is, the less it is believed in the village where Renzo is known as a worthy young man. The greater number think and whisper into their neighbours' ear that this is only a machination of the oppressor Don Rodrigo to ruin his poor rival. So true it is, that judging by induction, and without the necessary knowledge of facts, one is sometimes liable to do even villains injustice.

But we, who have the facts under our hand as one may say, can affirm that if this man had had no part in Renzo's misfortune, he took as much pleasure in it as though it had been one of his own works, and triumphed in it with his confidants, particularly with the Count Attilio. The latter, according to his first design, should already have found himself in Milan; but at the earliest news of the tumult, which reigned there, and of the mob which roamed through the streets, and which had assumed no very submissive attitude, he had thought it best to amuse himself in the country until all again should be quiet. More particularly as having offended many individuals, he had reason to fear that among so many, who alone through impotence had kept silence, some one might now take courage from the present circumstances, and judge the moment opportune for avenging the wrongs of all. This suspense, however, was not of long duration; the arrival of the order from Milan for the pursuit of Renzo indicated that already things had returned to their ordinary course; and almost at the same time more positive certainty was obtained. The Count Attilio departed immediately, encouraging his cousin to persist in the enterprise, and overcome every obstacle; promising him at the same time, that on his own account he would speedily lend a hand to free him of the Friar; in which project the fortunate accident of the rival being so despicable would make it an admirable joke. Attilio had scarcely departed when Griso arrived safe and sound from Monza, and reported to his master all he had been able to collect there; that Lucia had been received into a certain convent under the protection of a cer-

tain Signora, that she always remained concealed there as though she herself were a nun, never setting a foot beyond the door, and that she assisted at the ceremonies of the church behind a little grated window; a circumstance which displeased many people, who having heard speak of her adventures, and of the beauty of her countenance, would like to have seen a little how this same countenance was formed.

These relations put the devil into Don Rodrigo, or more correctly speaking, rendered still worse the one which was already at home within him. Many circumstances favourable to his design inflamed still more his passion, that is, the mixture of pique, rage, and infamous desire of which his passion was composed. Renzo was absent, outlawed, banished; every thing might be permitted towards him, and even his betrothed might be considered as the property of a rebel; the only man in the world who could and would interest himself in his behalf, and make noise enough to be heard far off and by people in power, this mad Friar, would probably soon be no longer in a condition to injure any one; and behold, a new impediment arises, which not only counterbalances all these advantages, but renders them, so to say, useless. A convent at Monza, even had no Princess resided in it, was too hard a bone for Don Rodrigo's teeth; and however much he might rove round this asylum in imagination, he could devise neither way nor means of violating it, either by strength or artifice. He was almost inclined to abandon his enterprise; he had resolved to go to Milan, making a detour in order to avoid passing through Monza, and in Milan, in the midst of his friends, deliver himself up to amuse-

ment, and thus endeavour to drive away, by gaiety, this thought, which was ever becoming a greater torment. But—these friends! He must go gently to work with these friends. Instead of a distraction from sad thoughts, he might expect fresh vexations in their society; for already, doubtless, Attilio would have blown his trumpet, and all would be full of expectation. On all sides he would be questioned regarding this mountain maiden; he should be obliged to reply. He wished, and he attempted, what had he obtained? He had made a resolve, a somewhat ignoble resolve, it is true; but no one can always regulate his desires; the point is to satisfy them; and how should he extricate himself from his embarrassments? Surrender to a villain, to a friar? Uh! and this too precisely when an unexpected good fortune has delivered him, without the slightest exertion on his part, from one difficulty, and a clever friend from another, the fool does not know how to avail himself of the favourable circumstances, and withdraws pusillanimously from the enterprise. Here is occasion for him never again to raise his head among gentlemen, and always to carry his sword in his hand. And then how could he return, or how remain in this castle, in this place, which, setting aside the incessant and bitter memories of passion, would always remind him of an unsuccessful undertaking? Where the public hatred against him would have increased, and his reputation for power would have decreased? Where in the countenance of every clown, even in the midst of his bows, might be read a bitter irony? The way of iniquity, remarks the manuscript in this place, is wide; but this does not mean that it is an

easy way; it has its serious obstacles, its rough places; it has its share of fatigue and vexation, even although it descends.

An idea certainly occurred to Don Rodrigo, who would neither renounce this enterprise, draw back, nor remain where he was, and who yet could not proceed by himself, an idea by which he could assist himself; and this was to solicit the aid of one whose power was unknown, a man or a devil, for whom the very difficulty of the undertaking was often a stimulus. But this course had also its risks and inconveniences, and these were all the graver, because their consequences could be the less calculated; no one would be able to foresee how far affairs might go when once they had embarked themselves with this man, a powerful auxiliary certainly, but a not less arbitrary and dangerous commander.

Such thoughts as these kept Don Rodrigo for some days in a terrible uncertainty between a no and a yes, both one and the other more than annoying. In the meantime a letter arrived from his cousin, which said that the plot was well laid. Shortly after the lightning was heard the thunder; suffice it to say, that one fine morning it was known that Father Cristoforo had left the convent of Pescarenico. This speedy success, Attilio's letter which inspired him with courage, and threatened him with much pleasantry, induced Don Rodrigo more than ever to incline towards the bold course; what, however, determined him at last, was the unexpected intelligence of Agnese having returned home; here was another impediment less in the way. Let us render account of these two events, commencing with the last.

The two poor women were scarcely settled in their retreat, than the news of the great disturbance at Milan spread itself through Monza, and consequently through the convent; and following this great piece of news an infinite number of particulars, which increased and varied every moment. The housekeeper, who from her house was able to keep one ear towards the convent and the other towards the road, gathered news here and news there, and imparted it to her guests.

“They have imprisoned two, six, eight, four, seven; they were seized in part before the bakehouse *delle Grucce*, in part in the street near the house of the Vicar of Provisions. Eh, eh! listen to this! Only one has escaped, and he was from Lecco, or that part of the world. I do not know his name; but I shall see some one who will be able to tell me; we shall see whether you know him.”

This announcement, together with the circumstance of Renzo's having arrived in Milan precisely on this fatal day, caused the women some uneasiness, particularly Lucia; you can then imagine what they must have felt when the housekeeper came and said to them, “He is really from your village; this fellow who has run away to escape hanging, he is a silk-weaver, and calls himself Tramaglino; do you know him?”

Lucia, who sate hemming something, let her work fall from her hands; she became pale, and changed colour so suddenly, that most certainly the housekeeper would have perceived it had she been nearer. But she stood at the threshold with Agnese, who also troubled, but not so much as her daughter, was able

to stand firm; and, in order to return some reply, said, that in a small village every one knew every one, and that therefore she was acquainted with this man; but that she could not imagine how he had done such a thing, because he was a very quiet young fellow. She then asked whether he had certainly escaped, and whither.

“ Every one says he has escaped, but where to no one knows. It may be that they will take him again; it may be that he is already in safety;—but if they get him again into their clutches, your quiet young fellow ——”

Here, fortunately, the housekeeper was called away, and went; imagine to yourself the state of mind in which the mother and daughter were left. More than one day were the poor mother and the desolate child obliged to remain in this uncertainty, turning over in their minds the how and the wherefore, the various consequences of this sad event, and commenting with themselves, or when this was possible, to each other in a low voice, upon these terrible words.

One Thursday, there at length arrived a man at the convent who sought Agnese. This was a fisherman from Pescarenico, who going to Milan, according to his custom, to sell his merchandise, in passing through Monzo had visited the convent at the request of the good friar Cristoforo, to greet the women from him, to relate to them as much as he knew concerning Renzo's sad situation, to recommend them to preserve patience, and place confidence in God; to assure them that he, poor friar as he was, would certainly not forget them, but would watch for the opportunity to aid them; and that in the meantime he would not fail to

send them every week all the intelligence he knew, either by this means or through some other messenger. Regarding Renzo, the messenger was unable to tell them anything either new or certain, except respecting the visit made to his house, and the search which had been instituted after him; but they learned at the same time that all this had been in vain, and that it was held for certain that he had placed himself in safety in the territory of Bergamo. There is no necessity to say that such a certainty was a great balm for poor Lucia; from this day forth her tears flowed more freely and more gently; she experienced a greater comfort in the secret consolations of her mother, and a thanksgiving mingled itself with all her prayers.

Gertrude often sent for her into her private parlour; she would sometimes converse for a long time together with Lucia, as it gave her pleasure to observe the candour and sweetness of the poor girl, and to hear herself every moment thanked and blessed. She related also, in confidence, a portion—the innocent portion—of her own history; she related how much she had had to endure in order to suffer yet more in the convent, and Lucia's first feeling of astonishment, not unmingled with suspicion, changed itself gradually into compassion. She discovered in this history more than sufficed to explain all that was somewhat singular in her benefactress's manner—an explanation which was much more satisfactory than Agnese's doctrine regarding the brains of the Signori. Much as she felt inclined to return the confidence Gertrude had reposed in her, she never once thought of mentioning to her these new causes of disquiet, her new mis-

fortune, of telling the Signora who this silk-weaver was who had made his escape, she feared spreading a report thus full of sorrow and scandal. She avoided as much as she could replying to the curious questions put to her by Gertrude regarding her history before the betrothal; but this was not through prudential motives. And it appeared to the poor innocent creature that her history was more thorny, more difficult to be related than anything she had heard or could hear from the Signora. In Gertrude's history there was tyranny, deceit, suffering; things hideous and sorrowful, but nevertheless things which could be named; but in hers there was mingled a sentiment, a word, which speaking of herself it appeared impossible to pronounce; a word for which she had never been able to find a substitute which did not seem wanting in modesty—love!

Sometimes Gertrude grew almost angry with her for thus always standing on the defensive; but then throughout she exhibited so much affection, respect, gratitude, and so much confidence also! Sometimes again, this very delicate modesty would displease her in another way; but all anger was lost in a sweet thought which constantly returned to her whilst gazing at Lucia,—“I do good to the poor girl.” And this was true; for, besides the asylum she offered her, these conversations, these familiar caresses, were no little consolation to Lucia. She found another consolation in constant employment, and always prayed that she might have something given her to do; she even carried into the parlour some work with which she might keep her hands busied; but, alas! how sad thoughts will thrust themselves in everywhere!

Sewing on and on unceasingly, a new occupation for her, her reel would recur every now and then to her mind, and with this reel how many other things!

The second Thursday this fisherman, or another messenger, again appeared with greetings from Father Cristoforo, and with the confirmation of Renzo's happy flight. More positive intelligence regarding his misfortunes he did not bring; for, as we have already told the reader, the Capuchin had hoped to receive such from his friend in Milan, to whom he had recommended Renzo; but this friend replied that he had neither seen the person, nor the letter; that certainly some one from the country had come to the monastery in search of him; but that, not having found him there, he had gone away, and not again presented himself.

The third Thursday no one was seen; and for the poor women this was not only the loss of a desired and hoped for consolation, but, as it happens with people in affliction and embarrassment that every little thing is a cause of disquiet, this little circumstance filled them with a hundred alarms. Before this occurrence, Agnese had thought of making a little journey home, and now the singularity of their ambassador's not arriving decided her. For Lucia it was a serious affair, this separation from her mother; but the desire of knowing something, and the security which she enjoyed in this guarded and sacred asylum, conquered her repugnance. And it was decided between them that the following day Agnese should go and watch on the road for the fisherman, who must pass that way, returning from Milan, and request a seat in his cart as far as her mountains. She met

him, and asked whether the Father Cristoforo had not intrusted him with some commission for her; the fisherman, it seemed, had been busied fishing the whole day before his departure, and had heard nothing of the Father. Agnese had no need to pray long, in order to obtain the boon she desired; she took leave of the Signora and of her daughter, not without tears, promising soon to send news of herself, and to return quickly, and then departed.

Nothing particular occurred during the journey. They reposed part of one night at an inn, as was customary, set off the next morning before dawn, and arrived early at Pescarenico. Agnese ascended to the little square before the monastery, and took leave of her conductor with many thanks, and being there, wished to see the Friar, her benefactor, before going to her home. She rang the bell; and he who came to open the gate was Fra Galdino, the friar of the walnuts.

“O! my good woman, what wind has brought you here?”

“I come to seek Father Cristoforo.”

“Father Cristoforo? He is not here.”

“O! will it be long before he returns?”

“But ——?” said the Friar, raising his shoulders, and burying his shaven head in his hood.

“Where is he gone to?”

“To Rimini.”

“To ——?”

“To Rimini.”

“Where is that place?”

“Eh, eh, eh!” replied the Friar, cutting the air vertically with his outstretched hand, as if to indicate a great distance.

“O poor creature that I am! But why has he set off thus suddenly?”

“Because the Father Provincial has wished it.”

“And why has he sent him away? He who does so much good here? O good heavens!”

“If the Superiors were obliged to render an account of all the orders they give, where would be our obedience, my good woman?”

“Yes, but this is my ruin.”

“Do you know how this will have happened? They will have had occasion for a good preacher at Rimini (we have good preachers everywhere, but sometimes they want a man made expressly for the occasion). The Father Provincial of Rimini will have written to the Father Provincial of this place, to know whether there were a brother such as he required here; and the Father Provincial will have returned for answer, that it is only Father Cristoforo who can answer his purpose.”

“O unfortunate people that we are! When did he depart?”

“The day before yesterday.”

“Ah, only see! if I had but paid attention to the desire I felt to leave some days ago! And it is not known when he will return? Not even within a few days?”

“Ah, my dear woman! If any one knows, it is the Father Provincial. When one of our preaching fathers has taken his flight, it is impossible to foresee on what bough he will settle. He is sent for here, he is sent for there; for we have convents in the four quarters of the globe. You may be certain that, at Rimini, Father Cristoforo will make a great sensation

by his sermons preached in Lent; for he does not always preach extempore as he does here to the fishers and peasants; for the pulpits of the city, he has his beautiful written sermons; that is the important point. The fame of this great preacher will spread on all sides; they may even send for him from—from where do I know? And then he must go, because as we live on every's one charity, it is but right that we should serve every one."

"O Lord, Lord!" exclaimed Agnese again, almost in tears; "what must I do without this kind man? He was a father to us. This will be our ruin."

"Listen, good woman, Father Cristoforo was certainly a good man, but we have other brothers do you know? full of charity and of talent, who know how to behave, both towards the rich and the poor. Will you see Father Atanasio? Father Girolamo? Father Zaccaria? He is a worthy man do you see, this Father Zaccaria, and don't be astonished, as many ignorant people are, that he is so thin, has such a cracked voice, and such a miserable little beard; I don't say anything of his preaching, for every one has his peculiar gifts, but for giving advice he is a man, I can tell you."

"O heavens!" exclaimed Agnese, with that mixture of gratitude and impatience, called forth by an offer, in which there is more goodwill than usefulness. "What does it matter to me what this man or the other is, if the poor man, no longer here, is the one who knew our affairs, and had prepared all to assist us?"

"Then you must have patience."

"That I know," replied Agnese; "pardon the trouble I have given."

“For what shall I pardon you? I am sorry for you. If you should decide upon seeking advice from one of our Fathers, the convent is here, and will not stir. Ah! I shall soon shew myself for the collection of oil.”

“Good-bye,” said Agnese, and walked towards her little village, feeling desolate, confounded, disconcerted, like some poor blind man who has lost his staff.

Being somewhat better informed than Fra Galdino, we can say how the affair really happened. Attilio, as soon as he arrived at Milan, went as he had promised Don Rodrigo, to visit their mutual uncle of the secret council. This was a council composed of thirteen members, men of the robe and the sword, from whom the governor received advice; and he dying, or being removed, this council assumed the temporary government. This uncle the Count, decorated with his robes, and one of the oldest members, enjoyed a certain power in the assembly; but in exercising this authority, and in making it felt by others, he had not his equal. An ambiguous manner of speaking, a significant silence, a stopping short in the middle of his sentence, a contraction of the eyes, which expressed, “I cannot speak,” a manner of flattering without absolutely promising, were all artifices directed to this one end; and all, more or less, were exercised in its behalf. And this was carried so far that his saying, “I can do nothing in this affair,” often the pure truth, but spoken in a manner which made the words not believed, would often serve to increase the reputation, and therefore the reality of his power; just as you may sometimes still see in apothecaries’

shops, boxes upon which are written certain Arabic words, boxes which, though empty, serve to maintain the credit of the shop. This uncle, the Count, who for a long time had been progressing by slow degrees, lately had all at once taken a giant's stride. On an occasion of importance, he had made a journey to Madrid, charged with an embassy at Court, and you should only have heard him relate how he was received there! The Count-Duke had treated him with a marked attention, not to say with something more, and he had taken him so far into his confidence, as once to ask him in the presence, one might say of half the court, whether Madrid pleased him; and to have said to him another time in a tête-à-tête, when standing in the recess of a window, that the cathedral in Milan was the grandest temple in the king's dominions.

Having paid his compliments to the Count his uncle, and presented those of his cousin, Attilio, with a serious mien, which he well knew how to assume at the proper time, said, "I believe I am performing my duty, without betraying the confidence of Rodrigo, in informing my Signor uncle of an affair which, unless he take it in hand, may become serious, and lead to consequences which ——"

"Some one of his follies, I imagine."

"For the love of justice I must say that the fault is not on my cousin's side. But he is warm; and as I say there is no one but my Signor uncle who could ——"

"We see, we see."

"There is living near him a Capuchin friar, who is angry with Rodrigo, and things have arrived at such a point ——"

“How often have I told you both, that you must let the friars cook their broth.* It is enough that they give to those to whom they are obliged to give — to those whom it concerns —” and here he drew a deep breath. “But you who can avoid——”

“Signor uncle, in the present case it is my duty to inform you that Rodrigo would have avoided it, had this been possible. It is the Friar who has a grudge against him, who has endeavoured to provoke him in every possible manner ——”

“What the devil has this friar to do with my nephew?”

“In the first place, he is a hot-headed fellow, and known as such, who makes it his profession to quarrel with cavaliers. This fellow protects, directs, a little peasant girl of that part of the world; and has for her a love, a love—I do not say an unselfish love, but a very jealous, suspicious, touchy love.”

“I understand,” said the Count; and over a surface of stupidity implanted on his countenance by nature, overlaid again and again by layers of craftiness, there played a ray of malice very beautiful to observe.

“Now, for some time,” continued Attilio, “this friar has got it into his head, that Rodrigo has designs upon this ——”

“He has got it into his head, he has got it into his head,—I also know Don Rodrigo,—and some other advocate than your lordship would be necessary to justify him in these affairs.”

“Signor uncle, that Rodrigo may have joked with

* In Italy, the Capuchins are very much rallied upon the broth which they give to the poor who crave alms from them.

this creature, meeting her in the road, I should not be far from believing; he is young, and then he is no Capuchin; but these are frivolous things, not proper subjects of conversation with the Signor, my uncle; the serious part of the affair is, that the friar has actually spoken of Rodrigo as though he were a villain, and endeavours to excite the whole country against him ——”

“ And the other friars? ”

“ They do not meddle in the affair, for they know him to be a hot-headed fellow, and entertain much respect for Rodrigo; but then on the other hand, this friar stands high with the peasants, for he also passes himself off as a saint, and ——”

“ I imagine that this friar does not know that Rodrigo is my nephew.”

“ Yes, he knows it! And it is this that makes him all the more violent.”

“ How? How!”

“ For this reason, and he says this himself, he finds all the more pleasure in opposing Rodrigo, because he has a natural protector of so much authority as your lordship, and that he laughs at grandees and politicians, knowing that the cord of San Francesco holds bound even the sword, and that ——”

“ O the audacious Friar! What is his name?”

“ Fra Cristoforo da ——,” said Attilio; and the noble uncle took out of a little chest, which stood upon his table, a memorandum-book, and wrote in it, still loudly breathing, this poor name. Meanwhile Attilio continued, “ This fellow has always been of the same disposition; his life is well known. He was a plebeian, who finding himself possessed of a

few pence, wished to compete with the cavaliers of his neighbourhood; and through rage, at not being able to vanquish them all, he killed one of them; and then to escape the gallows he turned friar."

"But bravo! that's excellent! We will see, we will see," said the Count, continuing to puff forth mighty blasts.

"Now," continued Attilio, "he is more enraged than ever, because a project which he had much at heart has failed, and from this, my Signor uncle will be the better able to understand what kind of man he is. He wished to marry this creature of his,—it was to remove her from the perils of this world —— you understand me; or for some other motive, he wished absolutely to get her married; he had found the —— the man; another of his creatures, a fellow whom perhaps, or even without any perhaps at all, my Signor uncle will know by name; I hold it for certain that the Secret Council will have been forced to occupy itself with this worthy individual."

"Who is the fellow?"

"A silk-weaver, Lorenzo Tramaglino, the one who ——"

"Lorenzo Tramaglino!" exclaimed the noble uncle; "but well done, bravo, Father! Certainly —— in fact, —— he had a letter for a —— A crime that —— But it matters not —— It is good. And wherefore has the Signor Don Rodrigo told me nothing of all this? Why has he allowed things to go on so far, and not had recourse to those who could and would direct and support him?"

"I will speak the truth in this instance also," continued Attilio. "On one hand, knowing how many

affairs, how much business my Signor Uncle has in his head ——”—here the uncle, breathing loud, placed his hand upon his head, as though to indicate the great difficulty he felt in keeping all this world of business contained within it—“Rodrigo felt a scruple in troubling him with any other affair. And then I will tell you all; from what I have been able to hear, he is so much enraged, so out of himself, so wearied with the insults put upon him by this friar, that he has sooner wished to do himself justice in some summary manner, than to obtain it in a regular way, by prudence, and the arm of the signor, his uncle. I have endeavoured to extinguish this passion, but seeing that things were taking a bad course, I believed it my duty to inform my Signor uncle of all, who is the head and pillar of the house ——”

“You would have done better to speak a little earlier.”

“That is true; but I went on hoping that the affair would pass away of itself, or that the friar would return to his senses, or that he would leave his convent, as often happens with these friars, who now are here and now are there, and that thus all would be at an end. But ——”

“Now it will be my affair to settle this dispute.”

“This is what I also think, I have said to myself; our uncle, with his foresight, with his authority, will know how to prevent any scandal, and at the same time preserve Rodrigo’s honour, which is also his own. This friar, as I have before said, is always boasting of the cord of San Francesco; but is it necessary, in order to make a good use of this cord, to wear it round your body? The Signor uncle has a hundred

means of which I know nothing; I know, however, that the Father Provincial entertains, as is but right, a high deference for him; and if the Signor, my uncle, should think that the best remedy in this case would be to give the friar a change of air, he, with two words ——”

“Leave thinking to those whom it concerns, young sir,” said the noble uncle, somewhat roughly.

“Ah, that is true!” exclaimed Attilio with a shake of the head, and a smile of compassion for himself. “I, indeed, a proper man to give advice to my Signor uncle. But it is my jealousy for the reputation of the house which makes me speak. And then I fear to have committed another folly,” he added, with a sorrowful air. “I fear I have injured Rodrigo in the opinion of my uncle. I should be unable to find peace had I caused him to think that Rodrigo had not the confidence in him and all the submission which he really has. Believe, Signor uncle, that in this case it is right ——”

“Come, come, what injury, what injury between you two? who will be friends until one of you becomes wise. Libertines, libertines, who always are committing some folly; and then it is for me to set things to rights again; who—you will make me say some nonsense or other, who give me more to think of than—and here imagine the mighty puff he gave—than all these blessed affairs of state.”

Attilio again makes some apologies, some promises, some compliments, and then took leave, accompanied by a “be prudent,” which was the noble uncle’s form of leavetaking with his nephews.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHOSOEVER, chancing to see in an ill-cultivated field a plant, a fine plant of sorrel for example, should be desirous to know whether it had sprung up from a seed ripened in the field itself, was carried there by the wind or dropped by some bird, let him ponder ever so much, he will never arrive at a satisfactory conclusion. Thus we are unable to say, whether it was from the natural depth of his wisdom, or from the insinuations of Count Attilio, that the noble uncle gained the idea of employing the Father Provincial to cut in twain, in the best manner, this entangled knot. Certain it is, that Attilio had not given this advice, merely by chance; and although he must have expected that the jealous self-love of the uncle would revolt at so undisguised a suggestion, he was determined, at all events, to lay before him the idea of this remedy, and put him in the path which he wished him to pursue. On the other hand, this expedient was so well adapted to the uncle's disposition, so naturally suggested by the circumstances, that one could have wagered anything that it had been his own idea. The affair was, whether one of his name, his own nephew, in an open quarrel, should remain the vanquished party; this was a position nearly touching the reputation of that power which he had so near at heart. The satisfaction which his

nephew could take himself, would be a remedy even worse than the evil, a sowing of fresh misfortunes; and it was necessary to prevent this in some way or other, and that without loss of time. Should he command him immediately to leave his castle, he would perhaps not be obeyed; and even should he be, this was surrendering the field of battle, a retreat of the palace before the convent. Commands, legal force, terrors of this nature, were of no value against an adversary of this description; both the regular and secular clergy were entirely placed beyond the power of any legal jurisdiction; and not only their persons, but their habitations also, enjoyed this privilege, as our reader must know, should he have perused no other history than ours. All, therefore, that could be done with such an adversary was to endeavour to remove him, and the means by which this was to be obtained was the Father Provincial, upon whose will his stay or departure depended.

Now, there existed between the uncle the Count, and the Father Provincial, an old acquaintance; they saw each other rarely, but always met with a great demonstration of friendship, and with reiterated offers of service. At all times, it is better to have to do with a man who is placed above a number of individuals, than with a subordinate who only sees his own affair, only feels his own passion, and who only troubles himself about his own business; whilst the other discovers in a moment a hundred relationships, a hundred consequences, a hundred interests, a hundred things to avoid, a hundred means of salvation; and thus, can choose from a hundred different schemes.

Having well considered every thing, the uncle one day invited the Father Provincial to dinner, and arranged that he should meet a circle of guests chosen with the greatest discretion. There were relatives of the highest nobility, people whose very name was a title, and who alone by their behaviour, by a certain native confidence, by a lordly disdain, by speaking of great things in familiar terms, succeeded, even without intending it, in impressing and reviving every moment, in the minds of all present, the idea of their superiority and power; besides these nobles, there were also among the guests some clients, attached to the house by hereditary dependence, and to the host by a servitude of all their lifetime; who, beginning with the soup to express "Yes," with their mouths, their ears, their eyes, with their heads, with their bodies, and with all their soul, by the time dessert arrived, had caused one to forget how a man might say "No."

At table, the noble host soon contrived that the discourse should turn upon his embassy to Madrid. One road leads to Rome, with him many led to Madrid. He spoke of the Court, of the Count-Duke, of the ministers, of the governor's family, of the bull-fights, which he could describe very well, having enjoyed a distinguished place, and of the Escorial, which he could render a minute account, a servant of the Count-Duke's having conducted him through all its apartments. For sometime all the guests remained a silent audience, attentive alone to him, afterwards, however, they divided themselves into separate groups; and he then continued to relate more of these fine things, as though in confidence, to the

Father Provincial, who was seated near him, and let him talk, talk, talk. But at a certain point, he gave a turn to the discourse, passed on from Madrid, from court to court, from dignity to dignity, and at length spoke of Cardinal Barberini, who was a Capuchin, and nothing less than brother of the then Pope Urban VIII. The noble uncle was here obliged to allow others beside himself to talk, himself listen, and recollect that, after all, this company was not composed of people dependent upon him. Shortly after, when they had risen from table, he begged the Father Provincial to step aside with him into another apartment.

Two powers, two hoary-headed men of consummate experience, found themselves front to front. The magnificent Signor made the most reverend Father take a seat, then seated himself, and commenced in these words:—"Considering the old friendship which exists between us, I have thought I might speak to you of an affair of common interest to us both, which might be concluded between us, without having recourse to other means, which could—And therefore, frankly, with my heart in my hand, I will tell you what all this is about, and I am certain that in two words we shall be perfectly of accord. Tell me whether, in your convent of Pescarenico, there is not a Father Cristoforo da ——?"

The Father Provincial gave a sign of affirmation. "Nay, I request your reverence to tell me frankly, as a friend,—whether this individual—this Father——I know nothing of him personally; it is true that I know divers Capuchin fathers, excellent men, zealous, prudent, humble;—I have been a friend to

this order from my youth. But, in all rather large families, there is always some member, some individual—and I know from certain adventures that this Father Cristoforo is a man—rather a friend to disputes,—who has not all that prudence, all that reverence.—I would bet that more than once he has given your reverence something to think about.”

“I understand; there is another intrigue,” thought the Father Provincial, “it is my fault. I knew that this blessed Cristoforo was the right sort of friar to send from pulpit to pulpit, and not the man to leave six months in one place, especially in a convent down in the country. Oh!” he pursued aloud, “really I am sorry to hear that your magnificence has formed such an idea of Father Cristoforo; for as much as I know, he is a religious man of the most exemplary conduct within the convent, and held in the highest esteem without.”

“I understand very well; your reverence must——however, as a sincere friend, I will inform you of a thing which it will be useful to you to know, and even should you already be informed, I can, without betraying my trust, lay before you certain consequences, certain—possibilities; I say nothing more. This Father Cristoforo we know has taken under his protection a man of that part of the country, a man——your reverence will have heard speak of him; the man who has caused so much talk by escaping from the officers of justice, after having done, that terrible day of San Martino, such things—things——Lorenza Tramaglino, in short!”

“Ahi!” thought the Father Provincial; but said, “this circumstance I was not aware of, but your mag-

nificence knows very well that a part of our duty is to go in search of wanderers from the right path and bring them back——”

“Good: but the protection of transgressors of a certain kind! These are difficult things—delicate affairs——” And here, instead of puffing out his cheeks and blowing, he pressed together his lips, and drew in as much air as he was usually in the habit of breathing forth; then he continued, “I have considered it, as well to give you an idea of this circumstance; for, if ever your Excellence —— Some step might be taken at Rome. I do not know anything ——and from Rome something might arrive——”

“I am much obliged to your magnificence for this information; however, I am certain that, if inquiries were made regarding this affair, it would be found that Father Cristoforo has had no intercourse with the man of whom you spoke, except with the desire of recalling him to his duty. I know Father Cristoforo myself.”

“Such being the case, your reverence will know better than I what sort of a character this man bore when he belonged to the world, and also the frolics of his youth.”

“It is the glory of our habit, Signor Count, that a man, who in the world has made himself notorious, clothed with this garment becomes another being, and since Father Cristoforo wears this habit ——”

“I should like to believe it; I say it from my heart, I should like to believe it; but sometimes, as the proverb says—the habit does not make the monk.”

The proverb did not seem very *à-propos*; but the Count had substituted it in haste in place of another

which he had had upon his tongue's end—"the wolf changes his skin, but not his nature."

"I have proofs," continued he, "I have testimonies ——"

"If you know positively," said the Father Provincial, "that this religious man has committed some error, and every one is liable to err, I shall consider it a real favour the being informed of it. I am the Superior, unworthily certainly, but nevertheless I am the Superior, and as such it is precisely my duty to correct and to mediate."

"I will tell you: there is connected with the unpleasant circumstance of the Father's open protection of the person of whom I have told you, another vexatious thing which could —— But between us we will settle all at once. And this is, I say, that this same Father Cristoforo has begun to wage war against my nephew Don Rodrigo" * * *

"Oh, but I am sorry for this, I am sorry for this; really I am sorry for this!"

"My nephew is young, lively, feels keenly, and is unaccustomed to provocation ——"

"It shall be my duty to take cognizance of a fact like the present. As I have already said to your magnificence, and I speak with a Signor who has no less sense of justice than knowledge of the world, we are all flesh and liable to err—now in this way, now in another; and if Father Cristoforo should have failed in the fulfilment of his duty ——"

"But your reverence sees that these are affairs, as I have already said, which may be terminated between us, which may be kept secret here; things with which to meddle, would only be to make worse

of the matter. You know how things will occur; these quarrels, these dissensions, given rise to in the commencement by some trifle, and which go on, and go on —— And does one desire to get at the bottom of them, one either can never reach the end, or else a hundred fresh annoyances start forth, suppress, or put a stop to the affair; my very reverend Father, suppress, or put a stop to it; my nephew is young; the monk, from all we hear, has still all the spirits, all the —inclinations of a youth; and it is for us, who have reached our years—only too many in number, eh, most reverend Father?”

Should any one have been present at this conversation, he would have stood in the position of a person at the theatre when, in the midst of an opera, through some blunder a scene is removed before its time, exposing a singer to view, who at this moment, never thinking of an audience, is conversing freely with his companion. The countenance and the manner of the noble uncle when he said, ‘only too many!’ were entirely natural; this time he was no longer the politician; it was the pure truth that his many years caused him vexation. Not that he wept over the times that were past, over the fire, the graces of his youth;—these were frivolities, follies, annoyances! The cause of his sorrow was a more solid and important one; it was that he hoped for a higher station when this should be vacant, and feared that he should not arrive in time. Having obtained which, one might be certain that he would no longer trouble himself about his years, he would have desired nothing beyond, and would have died content, as all people who very much desire a thing say they shall do when once they have attained their object.

But let us leave him to speak for himself. "It is for us," he continued, "to have judgment for the young, and to repair their misdeeds. Fortunately we are yet in time; the affair has not yet made a noise, it is still the case of a good *principiis obsta*. Let us remove the fire from the straw. Sometimes an individual who does no good, or who might cause disturbances in one place, turns out well in another. Your reverence will know well where to find a convenient niche for the monk. There is also another circumstance, which is, that he, having become suspicious to a certain person, might himself desire to be removed; and thus by placing him in a situation some little way off, we give him a journey and render good service to two parties; and thus all is well arranged, or rather there is nothing done amiss."

The Father Provincial had expected this conclusion from the very commencement of the conversation. "Ah, heaven!" thought he, "I see what thou wouldst drive at; as usual, when a poor Friar has a quarrel with some of you, or with only one, or gives you the slightest umbrage, the Superior, without seeking to learn whether he is in the right or in the wrong, must immediately have him removed."

When the Count had ended, and sent forth a long-drawn breath, which was equivalent to a full-stop, the Father Provincial said, "I know very well what the Signor Count would say; but before taking a step——"

"It is a step, and it is not a step, very reverend Father; it is a natural thing, a common thing; and unless this expedient is adopted, and that too speedily, I foresee a mountain of irregularities, an Iliade of

woes. A folly—I will not believe my nephew would —— I am here to prevent that. But at the point which the affair has now reached, unless we put an end to it, and that without loss of time, it is impossible that it should cease, or remain secret,—and then, it is no longer my nephew alone —— A whole wasp’s-nest is excited, my very reverend Father. You see we are a house, we have relatives ——”

“That is manifest.”

“You understand me; they are all people who have blood in their veins, and that in this world —— is something. Punctilio enters into the affair; it becomes of general interest, and then —— even he, who is the friend of peace—— It will be a real grief for me to be obliged to find myself.——I——who have always been so prepossessed in favour of the Capuchin fathers ——! Your Fathers, in order to do good, as is their custom, to the great edification of the public, have need of peace, should avoid contention, and live harmoniously with those who —— and then they have relatives in the world, — and these little points of honour, however important, extend, spread themselves, and involve—half the world. I find myself intrusted with this blessed charge, which obliges me to preserve a certain decorum. His Excellence—the Signori, my colleagues—it will become a party affair—all the more owing to the other circumstances. You know how such affairs proceed.”

“Certainly,” said the Father Provincial, “Father Cristoforo is a preacher; and I had already some thought —— I am asked —— But at the present moment, in circumstances such as these, it might appear a punishment, and a punishment before having well brought to light ——”

“No punishment; O no! a prudent precaution, a simple means, to prevent the evils which could —— I have explained myself.”

“Between the Signor Count and myself, the affair remains thus, I understand. But the facts being such as they have been reported to your Excellence, it appears to me impossible that something of all this should not have transpired in the country. There are everywhere instigators to mischief, busybodies—or at least idle malicious people who find extreme delight in seeing the nobles and the monks come to open strife; they follow the scent, they make malicious observations, they gossip. Every one has to observe a proper decorum; and I, as the Superior (unworthy though I be), have an express duty. The honour of my habit—is not my own affair—it is a trust which —— The Signor, your nephew, being of so warm a temperament, as your Excellence says, might consider this as a satisfaction given him,—and I do not say glorify himself, and triumph in it, but ——”

“Does the very reverend Father jest? My nephew is a cavalier, who is of consideration in the world—according to his standing and his worth; but before me he is a child; and he will do neither more nor less than what I prescribe. I will tell you moreover, that my nephew shall know nothing of all this. What need have we to render him an account of our actions? These are affairs which, as good friends, we transact between ourselves, and between us they must remain. Give no thought about that; I should be accustomed to keep silence.” And here he drew a deep breath. “And as to the gossips,” he continued, “what would you have them say? It is such a common thing to

see a monk go to preach in another place! And then we who see—who foresee,—we who are concerned,—we ought not to trouble ourselves about these idle tales.”

“However, in order to prevent them, it would be as well on this occasion, that the Signor, your nephew, should make some demonstration, give some visible sign of friendship, of regard, not on our account, but for the habit ——”

“Certainly, certainly; this is but just. However, there is no necessity; I know that the Capuchins always meet with the reception they ought to do from my nephew. He does this from inclination; it is the humour of the family; and besides, he knows he is doing what is agreeable to me. For the rest, in this case—as it is somewhat an extraordinary one—it is but right. Leave me to act, very reverend Father, I will command my nephew. That is, it will be necessary to insinuate it to him with prudence, so that he may not learn what has passed between us. For I should not wish us to put on a plaster where there is no wound. And from what we have concluded, the sooner this takes place the better; and if some employment should be found for him at some distance—so as to remove every occasion ——”

“Precisely at this moment I have a request from Rimini for a preacher. Perhaps I should, even without any other motive, have cast my eyes upon ——”

“Very convenient, very convenient. And when ——?”

“Since the thing must be done, it shall be done speedily.”

“Speedily, speedily, my very reverend Father;

better to-day than to-morrow. . And," he continued, rising from his seat, "if either I or my family could be of any service to our good Capuchin fathers ——"

"We know from experience the goodness of your house," said the Father Provincial, who had also risen, and followed his conqueror towards the door.

"We have extinguished a spark," said the other, stopping for a moment; "a spark, very reverend Father, which could have caused a great conflagration. Between good friends, with a few words, mighty matters may be settled."

When they had arrived at the door, the Count opened it, and would absolutely insist upon the Father going out first; they then entered the other apartment, and joined the rest of the company.

A great deal of care, a great deal of art, and many important words, were employed by this Signor in a negotiation like the present; but he produced corresponding effects. In fact, by this conversation which we have reported, he succeeded in making Fra Cristoforo travel on foot from Pescarenico to Rimini, which is a good journey.

One evening a Capuchin from Milan arrived at Pescarenico with a packet of letters from the Superior of the convent. Within them was contained the order for Fra Cristoforo to betake himself to Rimini, where he must preach during Lent. The letter addressed to the Superior brought instructions to insinuate to the aforesaid Friar, that he should lay aside every thought regarding affairs which he might perchance have begun in the place he must now leave, and that he should keep up no correspondence; the brother who officiated as porter should accom-

pany him on his journey. The Superior said nothing that evening; but the next morning he ordered Fra Cristoforo to be called, shewed him the commands, and told him to go and take his basket, his staff, his towel, and his girdle, and to set forth immediately with the companion who was offered him.

I leave it to my readers to think whether this was a blow for our Friar. Renzo, Lucia, and Agnese presented themselves immediately to his mind; and he exclaimed internally—"O God! what will these unfortunates do when I am no longer here!" But he raised his eyes to heaven, and accused himself of want of confidence, of having believed himself necessary to any one. He crossed his hands upon his breast in sign of obedience, and bowed his head before the Superior, who, drawing him aside, gave him the other piece of information, partly as advice, partly as a command. Fra Cristoforo went to his cell, took his basket, placed in it his breviary, his Lent sermons, and his bread of pardon, girded his robe with a leathern girdle, took leave of his brethren, who were then in the convent, and lastly went to receive a blessing from the Superior, after which, with his companion, he departed by the road he had been ordered to pursue.

We have already said, that Don Rodrigo, more determined than ever to bring his fine enterprise to an issue, had resolved to seek the aid of a terrible man. We can give neither the name, the surname, nor the title of this personage, nor dare we even form any conjecture regarding him—a thing all the more strange, as we find mention of this individual in more than one book (we speak of printed books), in more than one book of this time. That this is the

same personage, the identity of the facts leaves not the slightest doubt, but everywhere is observed a great care to avoid the name, as though this name must burn the pen and the hand of the writer. Francesco Rivola, in his life of Cardinal Federigo Borromeo, having to speak of this man, calls him, "a Signor, as powerful through his wealth, as illustrious from his birth;" and here he stops. Giuseppe Ripamonti, who, in the fifth book of the fifth decade of his *Storia Patria*, mentions him at greater length, speaks only of him, as *a certain person, a man, this man, this personage*. "I will relate," he says, in his beautiful Latin, "the deed of a certain man who, belonging to the very first nobility of the city, had fixed his abode in a certain part of the country near the frontiers; and there, insuring himself safety through his many crimes, set at nought judges, decrees, every manner of magistracy and sovereignty. He led a perfectly independent life. He offered an asylum to outlaws, having once himself been outlawed; afterwards returning, as though nothing had been ——" We will, however, borrow from the author a few other passages, which will not only be found very *à propos*, as confirmation, but will also explain the recital of our Anonymous, with whom we still travel on.

To do that which was prohibited by the laws, or was rendered difficult by any power whatsoever to be the arbitrator; the supreme judge in the affairs of others, without any other interest than the mere love of command; to be feared by all, even by those who made themselves feared by every one; such had always been the ruling passions of this man. From his earliest

youth, seeing and hearing speak of so many oppressors, of so much contention, at the sight of so many tyrants, he had experienced a mingled sentiment of anger and impatient envy. Young, and living in a city, he allowed no occasion to pass by, or rather he went in search of such, in which he could contend with the most famous individuals of this profession, oppose them, measure his strength against theirs, make them subservient, or compel them to seek his friendship. Possessing greater wealth, and a more numerous retinue than most of the others, and superior to all, perhaps, in constancy and ardour, he obliged many to withdraw themselves from every species of rivalry, many he thoroughly chastised; in many he found his friends, not exactly friends on an equal footing with himself, but such as alone could please him, subordinate friends, friends who would recognise their own inferiority, and who would stand on his left hand. In truth, however, he came at length to be the active servant, the tool of all these men; they did not fail when in difficulty, to request the aid of so powerful an auxiliary; for him to have drawn back would have caused his reputation to decline, he would have been faithless to his undertaking. So that both on his own account, and on account of others, he had to commit such crimes, that, at length, neither his name, nor his parentage, nor his friends, nor his own audacity, were able longer to support him against the sentence of banishment pronounced upon him, or against the animosity of so many powers, and he was obliged to give way, and quit the state. I believe, that connected with this circumstance is a singular fact related by Ripamonti. "Once, when this man

was obliged to fly his country, such was his secrecy, respect, and timidity, that he traversed the city on horseback, followed by a troop of dogs and accompanied by the sound of trumpets, and in passing before the palace, left with the guard an impertinent message for the governor."

During his absence, he did not desist from his usual practices, or neglect to correspond with such of his friends as remained united with him—to translate literally from Ripamonti, "in a secret league of atrocious counsels and horrible deeds." It appears even that he then joined with still higher personages in certain new and terrible undertakings, of which the historian, whom we have already quoted, speaks with a mysterious brevity. "Foreign princes likewise had many a time recourse to his assistance in important homicides, and often they sent from far supplies of people to serve under his orders."

At length (it is not known after what space of ~~time~~), either the sentence of banishment having been removed through some powerful intercession, or the audacity of this man standing in place of freedom, he resolved to return home, and in fact, did return, not however to Milan, but to a castle situated on the frontiers of the Bergamascan territory, which then, as every one knows, belonged to the Venetian states. "This house," I again quote from Ripamonti, "was like an office for sanguinary warrants; you only saw domestics upon whose heads a price was set, and whose business was that of cutting off heads; neither the cook, nor even the scullion, were guiltless of murder; the very hands of the children were stained with blood." Besides this charming family, he had, the

same historian affirms, another, composed of similar members, dispersed and as it were quartered at various places in the two states upon the limits of which he resided—a family always ready to obey his orders.

All the tyrants who lived within a considerable distance had been obliged, either upon one occasion or another, to choose between the friendship or the enmity of this extraordinary tyrant. But things had gone so ill with the first who had attempted to resist him, that no one ever again desired to try the experiment. Yet, let you watch ever so much over your own affairs, let you stand alone, it was impossible to keep independent of him. One of his messengers would arrive to intimate that you should abandon such an enterprise, that you should cease to molest such a debtor, or things similar to these; and it was necessary to reply either yes or no. When one party went with the homage of a vassal, to lay before him an affair, the other party would find himself forced to the bitter alternative of choosing between submitting to his decision or of declaring himself this tyrant's enemy, which was equivalent to being, as was said in former times, consumptive in the last degree. Many people being in the wrong had recourse to him, in order effectually to be in the right; and others being in the right to gain so powerful a patronage, and thus prevent their adversaries from enjoying any means of access themselves; and thus all these became especially his dependents. Sometimes it happened that a defenceless man, oppressed and tormented by some noble, would fly to him, and he, taking the side of the oppressed, would force the oppressor to desist, to repair the evil he had done, and to sue for pardon;

but should the noble stand firm, he would wage war against him, compel him to abandon the places in which he had tyrannised, or even make him pay a more speedy and terrible homage. And, in these cases, this name so feared and abhorred has been for a moment blessed; for I will not say this justice, but this satisfaction, could not have been obtained in those times by any other power, either public or private. Oftener, nay generally, his power had been and was the servant of iniquitous desires, atrocious revenge, or of proud caprice. But the different uses he made of this power always produced the same effect—that of impressing in the minds of men a high idea of that which he could will and put in execution, spite of justice and injustice, those two great obstacles to the human will which so often cause men to retrace their steps. The fame of ordinary tyrants generally was confined to their own neighbourhood, where they were the richest and most powerful of the inhabitants: each district had its own; and they all resembled each other so much, that there was no reason why people should occupy themselves about those which did not immediately concern themselves. But the fame of our tyrant had already for a long time been spread throughout the Milanese; everywhere his life was related by the populace, his name signified something irresistible, strange, and fabulous. The suspicion that his colleagues and assassins were everywhere, also contributed to keep alive the memory of him. These were only suspicions, for who would have openly confessed to being one of his dependents? But every tyrant could be one of his colleagues, every robber belong to him; and the uncertainty itself rendered

more vast the idea, more intense the terror of the thing. And every time that there appeared faces of unknown braves, more wicked than usual, and upon the occurrence of any enormous crime, the author of which, at first, could neither be indicated nor divined; there was murmured the name of him, whom we, thanks to the blessed circumspection of our author, shall be forced to call the Unknown.

From the castle of this personage to the palace of Don Rodrigo it was not more than seven miles; and no sooner had the latter become lord and tyrant, than he had perceived that, living at this short distance from such a personage, it was impossible to carry on this trade without either coming to strife or living in peace with him. Therefore he had offered himself, and had become one of his friends, after the same manner as all the others it is to be understood; had rendered him more than one service—the manuscript says nothing more regarding this circumstance,—and had each time received promises of recompense and assistance when occasion for these should offer. He, however, took great care to conceal such a friendship, or at least to prevent its being seen how intimate and of what nature it was. Don Rodrigo certainly desired to play the tyrant, but not the lawless tyrant; the profession was for him a means not an end; he wished to reside at liberty in the city, to enjoy the comforts, the amusements, the honours of civilized life. And to do this it was necessary he should observe a certain respect, pay some regard to his relations, cultivate the friendship of high and mighty personages, and keep one hand upon the balance of justice, so as to cause it, when necessary, to sink on his side;

to retard it, or even, on certain occasions, to let it fall upon the head of some one who, by this means, could be more easily reached than by the weapons of private violence. Now the intimacy, or it would be better to say a league, with a man of this description, with a declared enemy of legal power, would certainly have been of no service to him, particularly with the Count his uncle. As much of the friendship as could not be concealed might pass for an unavoidable connexion with a man whose ill-will was so dangerous, and thus he might be excused by his position; for he who has the care of providing for the general safety, but who either has not the desire, or does not find the means, ends by consenting that every one shall himself look after his own affairs; or if he does not expressly consent, he at least closes an eye.

One morning Don Rodrigo set forth on horseback, equipped for the chase, accompanied by a small escort of bravoës on foot; Griso beside his stirrup, and four others behind, and in this manner he directed his course towards the castle of the Unknown.

CHAPTER XX.

THE castle of the Unknown was situated above a narrow and gloomy valley, upon the summit of a cliff which jutted forth from a rugged chain of hills, and it would have been difficult to say whether it were united to, or separated from this chain by a chaos of rocks and precipices, and a labyrinth of caves and abysses which stretched themselves on either hand. The only accessible side of the cliff is that which faces the valley; you behold a rather steep, but regular and continuous descent; above are pastures, below are fields scattered over here and there with habitations. Along the bottom of the valley extends a bed of pebbles, where flows, according to the season, either a small stream or a mighty torrent, which then serves as a boundary to the two states. The opposite chain, which forms as it were the other wall of the valley, has also a small tract of cultivation; the rest presents only rocks and stones, rapid descents, pathless and utterly bare, except where here and there a few bushes start out of the crevices of the rock.

From his gloomy castle, like the eagle from his bloody nest, this savage Signor reigned supreme over every inch of earth on which a human foot could tread, and never saw a living soul above him. Casting a glance below he could overlook all this inclosure, the mountain sides, the depth, and the various paths

which had been made there. The pathway, which full of turns and windings ascended to this terrible habitation, stretched itself out before the eyes of him who regarded it from below like a curling ribbon; and from the windows of this murderous dwelling, the Signor could at leisure count the steps of those who approached, and level his weapon a hundred times. And even had a considerable body of his enemies shewn itself, with the garrison of bravoës which he kept in his castle he would have been able to stretch them lifeless on the way, or have sent them all rolling to the bottom of the valley before a single one should have reached the summit. In short, no one dared set foot in the valley, not even to pass through it, unless he were regarded by this Signor with friendly eyes. An officer of justice then, who should have shewn himself there, would have been treated as a spy seized in an enemy's camp. Tragical stories were related of the last who had wished to attempt the undertaking; but these were already old histories, and not one of the younger men remembered ever to have seen a creature of this race in the valley either alive or dead.

Such is the description the Anonymous gives of the place, of its name he says nothing; and even, lest he should put us in the way to discover it, he says nothing either of Don Rodrigo's journey. He brings him straight into the middle of the valley, at the foot of the cliff, at the opening of the steep and winding pathway. Here was a tavern, which might also be called a *corps-de-garde*. Upon an old sign-board, which hung over the entrance, was painted on both sides a rising sun; but the public, who sometimes

repeat the names which they are taught, and sometimes alter them after their own fancy, only called this tavern the *Malanotte*.

At the sound of an approaching cavalcade, a lad, armed like a very Saracen, appeared upon the threshold, he cast a hasty glance at the party, and entered the tavern, to give information to three hectoring fellows, who were seated, playing with a filthy crumpled pack of cards. He who seemed the chief rose, looked out at the door, and recognising a friend of his master, saluted him respectfully. Don Rodrigo returned his salutation with great politeness, asking whether the Signor were at his castle, and, upon this man's replying that he believed he was, dismounted, and threw the bridle to Tiradritto, one of his followers. He then laid aside his musket, consigning it to Montanarolo, as if to disencumber himself of a useless weight, and thus ascend more easily; but in reality he did this, knowing very well that no one was permitted to shew himself on this cliff carrying a musket. He then drew from his pocket a few berlinghe, and gave them to Tanabuso, saying, "You wait here for me; and in the meantime amuse yourselves with these good fellows." He drew forth some gold coins, which he placed in the chief's hand, half for himself, half to be divided between his men; and, at length, with Griso, who had also laid aside his musket, he commenced the ascent on foot. Meanwhile, the three braves we have already mentioned, and Squinternotto, who was the fourth, (O only observe what beautiful names these are to be preserved with such care!) remained with the three belonging to the Unknown, and with the lad educated

for the gallows, to play, to drink, and to relate by turns their various feats of valour.

Another of the Unknown's braves, who was ascending, shortly after joined Don Rodrigo. He looked at him, recognised who he was, and accompanied him on his way, thus sparing him the annoyance of having to tell his name and give account of himself to as many others as should happen to meet him and not know him. When he had arrived at the castle, and been introduced into it, leaving Griso at the portal, he passed through a labyrinth of dark corridors, and through various halls, hung with a tapestry of muskets, sabres, and partisans; and in every one of these halls there was a bravo on guard. After having waited some time, he was admitted into the room where was the Unknown.

This mysterious personage came towards Don Rodrigo, returning his salutation, at the same time that he glanced at his hands and face, as he was accustomed to do, almost involuntarily, when any one came near him, even though this should be one of his oldest and most tried friends. He was tall, of a dark complexion, and bald; the few hairs which remained were white, his countenance was wrinkled; at the first glance, you would have pronounced him more than sixty, which was his real age. But his bearing, his movements, the remarkably hard expression of his features, the dark yet quick flash of his eyes, indicated a strength of body and mind which would have been extraordinary in a youth.

Don Rodrigo said that he was come to him for counsel and for aid; that finding himself engaged in a difficult undertaking, out of which his honour pre-

vented him from withdrawing himself, he had recollected the promises of this man, who never promised too much, or in vain, and determined to explain his terrible embarrassment to him. The Unknown, who already knew something of the affair, but only confusedly, listened with much attention, like one curious in such histories; for in this one was mixed up a name, at the same time, known and odious to him, the name of Fra Cristoforo, the open enemy of all tyrants. Don Rodrigo, knowing with whom he spoke, began to exaggerate the difficulties of the enterprise; the distance of the place, a monastery, the Signora — At this the Unknown, as though a demon concealed in his heart had prompted him, suddenly interrupted Don Rodrigo, saying, that he would take the whole affair upon himself. Took note of our poor Lucia's name, and took leave of Don Rodrigo, saying, "In a short time you shall receive from me advice what to do."

If the reader remember that wretch Egidio, who dwelt near the monastery in which poor Lucia was received, let him now learn that this man was one of the Unknown's most intimate associates in wickedness; it was on this account, therefore, that the latter had so readily and resolutely given his word. But no sooner was he alone, than he, I will not say repented, but felt sorry that he had given it. Already for some time he had experienced, if not remorse, a certain disgust towards his wicked deeds. Each time that he committed a fresh one, the many with which he had loaded, if not his conscience, at least his memory, were revived, and presented themselves to his mind in hideous colours; every fresh act of wickedness

committed, was like increasing a weight already inconvenient. A certain repugnance which he had experienced in perpetrating his first crimes, but which he had afterwards conquered so that it had eventually disappeared, now returned to torture him. But, in former times, the idea of a long undefined future, the feeling of vigorous life, filled his soul with a careless confidence; now, on the contrary, these very thoughts of the future were what rendered the past still more painful. "To grow old! to die! and then ——?" Strange to say, the image of death which, when near to danger, when in the very face of his enemy, had used to redouble the ardour of this man, and inspire him with an anger full of courage—this same image appearing to him in the silence of the night, in the security of his castle, threw him into a sudden consternation. This death was no longer that with which a mortal adversary would have menaced him; this it would be impossible to repulse by better weapons, by a quicker arm; this death came alone, was born within him, was perhaps still far off, but every moment approached nearer, and even whilst the mind painfully strove to remove the thought, the reality drew near. In earlier times the frequent examples, the spectacle, so to say, of perpetual violence, of vengeance, and of homicide, inspiring him with a ferocious emulation, had also served as a species of authority wherewith to overrule his conscience; now again rose every moment within his soul, the confused but terrible idea of an individual judgment, of a reason independent of example; now, the having issued forth from the common crowd of criminals, the having left them all behind him, called

forth a terrible feeling of solitude. This God of whom he had heard speak, but about whom he had not troubled himself for many a long day, either to deny or to acknowledge; this having lived as though there were no such Being, now, in certain moments of depression without a cause, of terror without danger, seemed to cry within his soul, "I exist, nevertheless!" In the first outbreak of his passion, the law which he had heard pronounced in the name of this God, had only appeared hateful to him; now, when this idea recurred suddenly to his mind, his mind, spite of himself, comprehended it as something which has its fulfilment. But he never opened his mind to any one regarding this his new cause of disquiet, he concealed it deep in his heart, and to dissemble his real feelings assumed a sterner ferocity, by this means seeking to hide them from himself and stifle them. Regretting the time (since he could neither annihilate nor forget it) in which he had been accustomed to commit crimes without remorse, without another thought than that of success, he did all in his power to make it return, to detain, and again bring back, this ancient will—bold, proud, immoveable, so as to convince himself that he was still the same man.

Thus, on the present occasion, he had immediately given his word to Don Rodrigo, so as to prevent any hesitation. But scarcely had the latter departed, than he felt the firmness which he had called forth for the moment, vanish, felt by little and little thoughts come into his mind which tempted him to break his word, thoughts which would have led him to lessen himself in the eyes of a friend, of an inferior accomplice; at once to cut short this painful combat he called Nibbio,

one of the most active and courageous ministers of his crimes, the one he generally employed in his correspondence with Egidio. With a resolute air he commanded him immediately to mount a horse, ride straight to Monza, inform Egidio of the engagement he had entered into, and require his aid in fulfilling it. The infamous messenger returned sooner than his patron had expected, bringing Egidio's reply that the enterprise was easy and safe; that the Unknown should send him immediately a carriage with two or three braves well disguised; that he would take upon himself the care of all the rest, and manage the whole affair. At this announcement, the Unknown, whatever might be his internal feelings, commanded this same Nibbio, in all haste, to dispose every thing according to the desire of Egidio, and to set off upon this expedition with two others whom he named.

If, in order to render the horrible service demanded of him, Egidio could only have counted upon ordinary means, he would certainly not have given thus quickly so decided a promise. But in this very asylum where it would seem every thing must be an obstacle, this wicked young man possessed a power known alone to himself; and that which for others would have been the greatest difficulty was for him an instrument. We have related how the unfortunate Signora had once listened to his words, and the reader will have comprehended that this was not the last time; it was only the first step in a path of abominations and blood. This same voice which had acquired strength, and I could almost say authority, through crime, now imposed upon her the sacrifice of that innocence of which she was the guardian.

The proposition appeared to Gertrude frightful. To lose Lucia through some unforeseen accident and without sin would have seemed a misfortune, a bitter punishment; and now she was commanded to deprive herself of her through an act of wicked perfidy, and to change a means of expiation into fresh remorse. The unfortunate being tried every way by which she could free herself from this horrible command; all, except the only one which was safe, and which always remained open before her. Crime is a severe and inflexible master, against whom you never are strong, unless you entirely rebel. Gertrude would not resolve to do this, and therefore she obeyed.

The appointed day had arrived; the very hour approached. Gertrude, alone with Lucia in her private parlour, lavished upon her more caresses than usual, and Lucia received and returned them with an increasing tenderness; as the sheep, trembling without fear under the shepherd's hand, which gently strokes and pats it, will turn and lick this hand, unconscious that the butcher to whom the shepherd but a moment before has sold her stands without the fold. "I stand in need of assistance, and you alone can serve me. I have many people to obey my commands, but there is no one in whom I can confide. Concerning an affair of great importance, about which I will tell you afterwards, I want to speak immediately with the Capuchin Father Superior who conducted my poor Lucia to me; but at the same time it is necessary that no one should know that I have sent for him. I have no one but you to send upon this secret embassy."

Lucia was terrified by such a request; and with

her usual timidity, but not without a strong expression of astonishment, she, immediately to excuse herself, alleged various objections, which the Signora ought to comprehend, and must certainly have foreseen; without her mother—without any one—alone on a solitary road, in an unknown country—— But Gertrude, educated in an infernal school, also shewed equal astonishment and much displeasure at meeting with a refusal from a person whom she had loaded with benefits, and she affected to consider these very frivolous excuses. In broad daylight, but a few yards along a road which Lucia had traversed but a few days before, even had she never seen it before, a simple direction would prevent her mistaking it—in short, she said so much, that the poor girl touched, and yet at the same time driven to consent against her own will, let “well, what must I do?” escape her lips.

“Go to the convent of the Capuchins,” and here she again described the road; “ask to see the Father Superior, and say to him when quite alone, that he must come immediately to me, but he must tell no one that it is I who have sent for him.”

“But what shall I say to the stewardess, who has never seen me leave the monastery, and who will ask me where I am going to?”

“Endeavour to go forth without being seen; and if you do not succeed, say that you are going to such a church, where you have promised to say certain prayers.”

Here was a new difficulty for the poor girl, the telling a lie. But the Signora again shewed herself so much hurt by this refusal, and made it appear to

Lucia so mean, the preference of a foolish scruple to gratitude, that the poor girl, confounded rather than convinced, and, above all, moved by her words, replied, "Ah, well! I will go. God help me!" and moved away.

"When Gertrude, who watched her from the grate with a fixed and troubled eye, saw her step upon the threshold, as though overpowered by an irresistible feeling, she opened her mouth, and said, "Listen, Lucia!"

Lucia turned back, and approached the grate. But already another thought, a thought accustomed to rule, had again obtained the victory in Gertrude's unhappy mind. She feigned to be dissatisfied with the instructions she had given, again described to Lucia the road which she should take, and then took leave of her, saying, "Do all that I have told you, and return quickly." Lucia then departed.

She passed unobserved through the cloister-gate, and walked on with her eyes cast down, keeping close to the wall; she found, assisted by descriptions given her, and by her own recollection, the suburb-gate, passed underneath it, walked along the high-road full of fear and trembling, and in a few moments reached the one which led to the convent; this she recognised also. This road was, and is still at the present day, sunk like the bed of a river between two high banks, bordered with trees, which meeting above formed a kind of vault. Lucia entered this road, and seeing that it was completely deserted, felt her terror increase, and quickened her steps; but soon she took courage upon seeing a travelling carriage waiting in the road, and near it, before the

open door, two travellers who looked here and there, as though uncertain of their way. Going forward, she heard one of these two say, "Here is a good young woman who will tell us the road." And when she came up to the carriage, the same traveller, with a manner more gentle than his appearance, turned to her, and said, "My good girl, can you tell us the way to Monza?"

"Going in this direction you are wrong," replied the poor girl; "Monza lies over here ——" and she turned round to point out the direction, when the other traveller (he was Nibbio) suddenly caught her round the waist and lifted her from the ground. Lucia, terrified, turned her head and screamed; the robber threw her with violence into the carriage, another, who was seated within, seized her, and spite of her struggles, forced her to sit opposite him, whilst a fourth, holding a handkerchief to her mouth, stifled her cries. Meanwhile, Nibbio quickly jumped into the carriage, the door was shut, and the carriage set off at full speed. The other, who had asked this treacherous question, remained in the road, and cast glances here and there, to see whether any one had hastened up on hearing Lucia's screams; but there was no one; he sprang upon one of the banks, and seizing a branch of one of the trees, he disappeared in the thicket. This was one of Egidio's servants, who had been placed at his master's door to see when Lucia should leave the monastery, and then had hastened a shorter way to wait for her at the appointed spot.

Who could describe the terror, the agony, which this poor Lucia endured? Who could express what

passed in her mind? She opened her terrified eyes, in her anxiety to know her horrible situation, and closed them again suddenly in her fear of these ugly faces; she struggled, but was held fast on every side; she collected all her strength, and endeavoured to fling herself out of the window, but two nervous arms held her, as though she were fastened to the seat of the carriage, four other immense hands detained her. Every time that she opened her mouth to scream, the handkerchief was thrust into it. Meanwhile, three infernal mouths in the most humane voice which they knew how to assume, continued to repeat, "Hush! hush! Do not be afraid, we will do you no ill." After a few moments of this painful struggle, she seemed to grow calm; her arms relaxed, her head fell back, she scarcely opened her eyelids; whilst her eyes remained immoveable, the horrible faces before her seemed to mingle, and blend themselves into a monstrous confusion; the colour fled from her countenance, a cold sweat covered her, she lost all power, and fainted.

"Come, come, courage!" said Nibbio. "Courage, courage," repeated the other two ruffians; but the loss of every sense prevented Lucia at this moment from hearing the encouragement spoken by these horrible voices.

"Diavolo! she seems dead!" said one of the braves. "If she should really be dead?"

"Oh, dead!" said the other; "it is only one of those fainting fits which women have. I know very well, that I do, when I have wished to send some one into the other world, either man or woman, something else has been wanted."

“Come,” said Nibbio, “attend to your duty, and don’t be looking after other things. Get the muskets out of the case, and hold them in readiness, for in this wood in which we now are, there are always lots of robbers housed. Don’t hold them so in your hands. Diavolo! place them behind you. Don’t you see that this is a chicken-hearted girl who is ready to faint at nothing? If she were to see arms, she would die in good earnest. And when she is recovered, take good care not to frighten her; do not touch her, unless I give you a signal; I am enough to hold her. And be silent, leave me to speak.”

In the meantime the carriage, still travelling on at the same speed, had entered the wood.

After some time poor Lucia began to revive, as from a profound yet distressing sleep, and at length opened her eyes. At first she had considerable difficulty in distinguishing the frightful objects which surrounded her, and in collecting her thoughts; but soon she again comprehended her terrible situation. The first use she made of the little strength which had returned to her was to endeavour to throw herself out of the window, but she was held back, and she could only see the wild solitude through which they passed. She again sent forth a scream; but Nibbio, raising his large hand with the handkerchief, said, as gently as he could, “Come, be quiet, that will be the best for you. We do not wish to hurt you, but if you do not keep silent, we must make you.”

“Let me go! Who are you? Where are you taking me to? Why have you seized me? Let me go, let me go!”

“I tell you not to be afraid; you are not a child,

and ought to know that we do not wish to hurt you. Don't you see that we could have killed you a hundred times before this, if we had had the intention? Therefore remain quiet."

"No, no, let me go my ways; I do not know you."

"We know you."

"Oh, holy Virgin! How do you know me? Let me go, for charity. Why have you taken me?"

"Because we have been commanded."

"Who, who? who can have commanded you?"

"Hush!" said Nibbio, with a severe countenance; "such questions may not be asked of us."

Lucia attempted once more to precipitate herself suddenly through the windows, but seeing that this was useless, she had again recourse to prayers; and with her head bowed, with her cheeks streaming with tears, with her voice interrupted by weeping, with her hands clasped, she said, "Oh, for the love of God and the Holy Virgin, let me go! What evil have I done you? I am a poor creature, who have never hurt any one. From my heart I pardon you, and I will pray to God for you. If you have a daughter, a wife, a mother, only think what she would suffer were she thus situated. Recollect that we must all of us die, and that one day you will desire God to shew mercy to you. Let me go, let me go; the Lord will cause me to find my way."

"No, we cannot."

"You cannot? O Lord! Why cannot you? Where will you take me to? Why——?"

"We cannot, it is useless; do not be afraid, for we do not wish to hurt you; be quiet, and no one shall touch you."

Yet more alarmed, depressed, and terrified, at seeing that her words produced no effect, Lucia turned to Him who holds in his hands the hearts of men, and who can when He wills it soften even the hardest. She drew herself together as much as she could in the corner of the carriage, crossed her arms upon her breast, and prayed for some time in her heart; then drawing forth her rosary, she told her beads with more faith and fervour than she had ever before done in her life. Sometimes hoping she had obtained the mercy which she implored, she would turn to beseech these ruffians, but always in vain. Now she would again lose her senses, now recover them, only to revive to fresh agony. But we have not the heart to describe her sufferings more fully; too painful a compassion makes us hasten to the termination of this journey, which lasted more than four hours, after which we shall have to describe other hours of agony. We will transport ourselves to the castle where this unfortunate was expected.

She was expected by the Unknown, with a disquiet and a very unusual agitation of mind. Strange that this man, who had disposed of so many lives in cold blood, who in the many crimes he had committed had counted as nothing the torments which he caused, unless it were something to enjoy in them a savage vengeance, now, in seizing upon this unknown and poor peasant girl, experienced an abhorrence, I might almost say a terror. From a lofty window of his castle he had already for some time gazed towards an opening in the valley, and now saw the carriage appear, and now advance slowly, for the first speed had consumed the impetuosity and exhausted the strength of

the horses. And although, from the point at which he watched, the carriage did not appear larger than a child's toy coach, he immediately recognised it, and felt his heart beat quicker.

"Will she be there?" he suddenly thought. "What vexation this girl causes me! I must free myself of her."

And he was about to call one of his myrmidons, send him to meet the carriage, and order Nibbio to turn again and conduct the girl to Don Rodrigo's palace. But an imperious *no*, which resounded in his mind, caused this design to vanish. Tormented, however, by a desire of giving some order, and finding intolerable this inactive waiting for the carriage, which slowly advanced step by step, like some treason, or, who knows? like some chastisement, he sent for an old woman of his household.

This old woman had been born in this very castle, she was the daughter of an old seneschal, and had passed here all her life. What she had seen and heard since her infancy had impressed her mind with a mighty and terrible conception of the power of her masters; and her principal maxim, founded upon instructions and example, was, that it was necessary to obey these masters in every thing, for they were able to do either great good or great evil. The idea of duty, implanted like a seed in the hearts of all men, unfolding itself in hers, together with sentiments of respect, terror, and of a servile cupidity, had associated and adapted itself to them. When the Unknown became lord of the castle, and began to make such frightful use of his power, this woman felt at first a certain fear, together with a sentiment

of the most profound submission. In time she had become accustomed to the scenes she always had before her eyes, and always heard spoken of; the powerful and uncurbed will of so great a Signor seemed to her a species of fatal justice. Grown up, she had married a servant of the house, who, shortly after being absent on a perilous expedition, left his bones on the highway, and his widow in the castle. The manner in which the Signor immediately avenged his death gave her consolation. From that time forth she rarely set foot beyond the castle; and gradually she retained no other ideas of human life than those which she had received in this place. She held no regular situation, but in this troop of ruffians, now one, now another, gave her something to do; and this was her torment. Now she had rags to patch, now in haste to prepare food for those who returned from some expedition, now wounds to heal. Then the commands of these men, as well as their reproofs and thanks, were embellished with jeers and reproaches, "Old woman," was her usual appellation; and the additions varied according to circumstances, and the humour of her friend. And she, disturbed in her laziness and her self-love provoked in two of her predominating passions, returned these compliments by words in which Satan would have recognised more of his own spirit, than in the words of her provocators.

"Thou seest that carriage, down there!" said the Signor.

"I see," said the old woman, stretching out her pointed chin, and expanding her sunken eyes as though she would try to make them touch their sockets.

“Order a litter to be ready immediately, get into it, and be carried to the Malanotte. Quick, quick, that thou mayst arrive there before the carriage; there it comes on with the pace of death. In this carriage there is —— there ought to be —— a young girl. If there should be, tell Nibbio, in my name, to place her in the litter, and to come immediately to me. Thou wilt remain in the litter with this —— girl; and when you have arrived here, conduct her to thy chamber. If she should ask whither thou art taking her, to whom the castle belongs, be careful not to ——”

“Oh!” said the old woman.

“But,” continued the Unknown, “encourage her.”

“What must I say to her?”

“What thou must say to her? Encourage her, I tell thee. Hast thou reached thy age without knowing how to encourage a person when necessary? Hast thou never felt sickness of heart? Hast thou never felt fear? Dost thou not know what words console in such moments? Speak such words to her; find them in the memory of thy misfortunes. Go.”

When she was gone, he stood some time at the window, his eyes fixed upon the carriage, which already appeared much larger; then he raised them towards the sun, which at this moment concealed itself behind the mountain; now gazed at the clouds, which suddenly changed from brown to the hue of fire. He drew back, closed the window, and commenced pacing to and fro in the chamber with the step of a man in haste.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE old woman had hastened to obey and command with the authority of this name, which, by whatever mouth it might be pronounced in this place, put every one in movement; for no one ever imagined that any person would be daring enough to make use of it upon false pretences. In short, she arrived at the Malanotte a short time before the carriage; and seeing it approach, she descended from the litter, signed to the coachman to stop, neared the coach window, and signified in a low voice to Nibbio, who put out his head, her master's orders.

Lucia, when the carriage stopped, started, and recovered from a species of lethargy. She felt the blood again begin to circulate, opened her mouth and eyes, and looked around her. Nibbio had drawn himself back, and the old woman, her chin resting upon the carriage-door, gazing at Lucia, said, "Come, my good girl; come poor thing; come with me, with me, who have orders to treat you well and encourage you!"

At the sound of a woman's voice, the poor girl experienced a consolation, a momentary courage, but she immediately fell into a still greater terror. "Who are you?" she demanded with a trembling voice, fixing her astonished gaze on the countenance of the old woman.

"Come, come, poor girl," the old woman continued.

to repeat. Nibbio and his companions divining by the words, and the extraordinary softness of the old woman's voice, what were the intentions of their master, sought by gentle words to persuade the unfortunate girl to obey; but Lucia continued to gaze out of the carriage, and although the place, wild and unknown to her, and the guardians' air of security did not allow her to form one hope of succour, she nevertheless opened her mouth to scream, but seeing Nibbio exhibit the handkerchief, she restrained her cry, trembled, became silent, and was taken and placed in the litter. After her, entered the old woman; Nibbio ordered the two other braves to follow behind, whilst he ascended quickly, to wait upon the commands of his master.

"Who are you?" demanded Lucia, with anxiety, of this unknown and deformed visage; "why am I with you? where am I? where are you conducting me to?"

"To one who will be kind to you," replied the old woman; "to a great——fortunate are those to whom he wishes well; it is lucky for you, it is lucky for you. Do not be afraid, be gay, for he has commanded me to encourage you. You will tell him that I have encouraged you, will you not?"

Who is he? why? what does he want of me? I do not belong to him. Tell me where I am, let me go! tell these men to let me go,—to carry me to some church. Oh! you who are a woman, in the name of the Virgin Mary——"

This holy and gentle name, formerly repeated with veneration in her early years,—this name, which she herself had neither invoked for a long time, nor yet

heard pronounced, excited in the mind of the unfortunate being who now again heard it, a strange, confused, and vague sentiment; like the remembrance of light in an old man who has been blind from his infancy.

Meanwhile, the Unknown, standing in the portal of the castle, gazed below. He saw the litter ascend slowly, as before the carriage had done, and at a distance which decreased every moment, Nibbio ascending with hasty steps; when he had reached the summit, the Signor signed to him to follow, and went with him into an apartment of the castle.

“Well?” he said, stopping short.

“Every thing to a moment,” replied Nibbio; “the information in time—the woman in time—no one at the place—a single cry—no one appeared—the coachman ready—the horses excellent—not a person on the road;—but ——”

“But what?”

“But — I say the truth, I should have been better pleased had the order been to have given her a musket shot in the back, without hearing her speak, and without looking into her face.”

“How? how? what wouldst thou say?”

“I would say, that all this time, all this time —— She has excited my compassion too much.”

“Compassion! what dost thou know about compassion? What kind of a thing is compassion?”

“I have never understood it so well as this time; it is a thing something like fear, this compassion; if one allows it to take possession of oneself, one is no longer a man.”

“Let us hear what the girl has done, thus to move thee to compassion.”

“ Oh, most illustrious Signor! Such a long time —— weeping, praying, and casting such looks, and becoming as white, as white as death, and then sobbing, and then praying anew, and certain words ——”

“ I do not wish her in my house, this girl,” thought the Unknown, “ I have been a fool to have engaged myself; but I have promised, but I have promised. When she is far off ——” Then raising his head in a commanding attitude, he addressed Nibbio, saying, “ Now, put aside compassion; mount on horseback, take a companion, two, if thou wilt, and speed to the house of this Don Rodrigo, whom thou knowest; tell him to send —— but quickly, quickly, otherwise ——”

But here another internal *no*, more imperious than the first, prohibited him from finishing his sentence. “ No,” he said, with a resolute voice, as though to express to himself the command of this secret voice; “ no, go and repose thyself; and to-morrow do what I shall command thee.”

“ This girl must have some demon in her,” he then thought, and remained standing alone, his arms crossed upon his breast, his gaze fixed upon a part of the pavement where the rays of the moon, entering by a high window, formed a square of pale light, divided into smaller squares by the thick iron-bars, and again intersected more minutely by the compartments of the panes. “ Some demon, or —— some angel protects her.—Nibbio feel compassion!—To-morrow, to-morrow early, this girl shall leave this place; she shall follow her destiny, and —— and nothing more shall be said about her. And ——” he con-

tinued, with that air with which one commands a disobedient boy, knowing all the time that he will not obey, "and nothing more will be thought about her. This animal, Don Rodrigo, must not come and weary one with his thanks; for—I will not again hear this girl spoken of; I have served him, because—because I have promised; and I have promised, because—it was my destiny. But I wish him to recompense me well for this service. Let us see ——" And he sought to imagine some very difficult enterprise which he might impose on him as a compensation or even as punishment; but again these words crossed his mind, "Nibbio feel compassion!—What can this girl have done?" he continued, tormenting himself with this thought; "I will see her. Ah! no,—yes, I will see her."

And passing from one apartment into another, he found a small staircase, mounted it, groping along, went to the old woman's chamber, and assailed the door with a kick.

"Who is there?"

"Open the door."

At the sound of this voice, the old woman took three springs, and immediately the bolt was heard drawn back, and the door opened. The Unknown, standing on the threshold, cast a glance into the room, and by the light of a lamp which burned upon a small table he saw Lucia crouched down on the earth in the farthest corner of the chamber.

"Who has told thee to fling her there, like a bundle of rags, miserable woman?" said he to the old hag, with an angry frown.

"She has placed herself where it pleased her,"

she humbly replied; "I have done every thing I could to encourage her; she can tell you that herself; but she has not listened to me."

"Rise!" said the Unknown to Lucia, and approached her. But Lucia, in whose alarmed mind, this knocking, this opening of the door, the arrival of this man, and his words, had created a new terror, remained all the more shrunk together in the corner, with her face concealed in her hands, and only trembled all over.

"Rise; I do not wish to do you evil—and I can do you good," repeated the Signor. "Rise!" again thundered this voice, angered by having twice commanded in vain.

As though invigorated by her terror, the unfortunate rose suddenly upon her knees; and joining her hands, as she would have done before the image of some saint, raised her eyes to the countenance of the Unknown, and immediately lowering them again, said, "I am here, kill me."

"I have told you that I do not wish to hurt you," replied the Unknown, with a gentler voice, gazing upon this countenance, disturbed by anguish and terror.

"Courage, courage," said the old woman; "if he tells you himself, that he will not hurt you ——"

"And wherefore," replied Lucia, with a voice in which, spite of the trembling of fear, might be heard a certain confidence caused by her indignation and desperation, "wherefore have you made me suffer the pangs of hell? What have I done ——?"

"They have perhaps ill-treated you? Speak!"

"Oh, ill-treated me! They have seized upon me

by treachery, by force. Why? why have they taken me? why am I here? where am I? I am a poor young creature—what have I done? In the name of God ——.”

“God, God,” interrupted the Unknown; “it is always God; those who cannot defend themselves, who have no strength, have always this God to bring into the field, as though they had spoken with him. What do you intend to do with this word of yours? To make me ——?” he left the sentence unended.

“O sir, intend! What can I intend, I, poor girl, unless you are merciful towards me? God pardons many things, for one deed of mercy! Let me go; for charity, let me go! It is not well for one who must some day die, to torment a poor creature thus. Oh, you who can command, tell them to let me go! They have brought me here by force. Send me with this woman to——to my mother. Oh, most holy Virgin! my mother, my mother! for charity, my mother! Perhaps she is not far from here,—I have seen my mountains. Why do you make me suffer? Let me be conducted into a church. I will pray for you all my life. It would only cost you a single word. Oh, I see you are moved with compassion; say one word, one word! God pardons so many things for one work of mercy.”

“Oh, why is she not a daughter of one of those who have banished me,” thought the Unknown; “of one of those villains who wished to see me dead! How I should now rejoice in her screams; but instead ——”

“Do not reject a good inspiration!” pursued Lucia fervently, animated by the sight of a certain hesitation

in the countenance and bearing of her tyrant. "But if you will not do me this charity, the Lord will do it for me; he will cause me to die, and then all will be ended for me; but you ——! Perhaps one day you also —— But no, no; I will always pray the Lord to deliver you from every ill. What does it cost you to speak one word? If ever you should have to suffer these torments ——"

"Come, take courage," interrupted the Unknown, with a gentleness which quite amazed the old woman. "Have I done you any evil? Have I threatened you?"

"Oh, no! I see that you have a good heart, and that you feel pity for me, poor creature. If you wished it, you could cause me more fear than all the others; you could make me die; but instead you have ——somewhat consoled me. God will reward you for this. Complete your work of mercy——liberate me, liberate me!"

"To-morrow ——"

"Oh, liberate me now, immediately ——"

"To-morrow we will see each other again, I tell you. Come, in the meantime take courage. Rest yourself. You must require food; they will now bring you some refreshment."

"No, no. I shall die if any one enters; I shall die. Conduct me to a church. God will remember your actions."

"A woman will come and bring your food," said the Unknown; and having said this, he was himself astonished that such an expedient should have occurred to him, and that he should have ever felt the necessity of finding one, in order to reassure a woman.

“And thou,” he added suddenly, turning towards the old woman, “encourage her that she may eat; put her to sleep in this bed if she like it, in company with thyself, otherwise thou canst very well sleep one night on the floor. Encourage her, I say; keep her cheerful. And do not let her have to complain of thee!”

Having said this, he walked rapidly towards the door. Lucia rose, and ran to detain him and renew her prayer, but he was already departed.

“Oh, unfortunate that I am! Close the door, close it quickly!” and when she had heard the door closed and the bolt drawn, she returned to crouch again in her corner. “Oh, miserable girl that I am!” she again exclaimed, sobbing; “what shall I now pray for? Where am I? Tell me, tell me for charity, who is this Signor —— this man who has spoken to me?”

“Who he is? who he is? You wish that I should tell you? You can wait till I tell you. Because he protects you, you are grown proud; you wish to be satisfied, and make me the victim. Demand this of himself. If I should content you in this, such good words as you have from him would not be addressed to me. I am an old woman, an old woman,” she continued, muttering between her teeth; “cursed be young girls, who look well both weeping and laughing, and have always reason ——” But hearing Lucia sob, and the command of her master recurring to her mind, she bent over the poor girl, who lay huddled together in her corner, and continued in a softer voice, “Come, I have said nothing bad to you, be gay. Do not ask after things which I cannot tell you, and for the rest, be of good courage. Ah, if

you did but know how many people would be happy to hear themselves spoken to as he has spoken to you. Be cheerful, for directly something to eat will come, and I know, from the manner in which he has spoken to you, that there will be something good. And then go to bed, and —— you will leave a little corner for me also I hope,” she added, in an angry voice spite of herself.

“I will not eat; I will not sleep. Let me be, do not approach me, do not go away!”

“No, no,” said the old woman, retiring and seating herself upon an old chair, from whence she cast towards the poor girl certain glances at once of terror and envy. She then looked at her bed, tormented herself thinking that she should perhaps be excluded from it all the night, and grumbled about the cold. But she rejoiced herself with the idea of the supper, and with the hope that there would be also some for her. Lucia did not perceive the cold, neither did she feel hunger; and wholly overpowered by her misfortune, retained only a confused sentiment of her sorrows and terrors, similar to the delirious dreams of a sick person.

She returned to herself when she heard a knock; and raising her affrighted countenance, she cried, “Who is there? who is there? Let no one come!”

“It is nothing, it is nothing. Good news!” said the old woman, “it is Marta, who brings us something to eat.”

“Shut the door, shut the door!” cried Lucia.

“Ah, yes, immediately, immediately,” replied the old woman, and took a basket out of the hand of this same Marta, sent her away, reclosed the door, and

then came and placed the basket upon a small table in the middle of the room. She then invited Lucia many times to come and enjoy these good things. She made use of, in her opinion, the most efficacious words to produce appetite in the poor girl, and broke forth into exclamations over the exquisiteness of the food—"When people such as we happen to taste such food, they remember it for some time. Here is wine too, such as the master drinks with his friends—when any such come to visit him,—and when they wish to be merry together! Eh!" But seeing that all these temptations were useless, "it is you who will not," she said; "and do not say to-morrow that I have not encouraged you. I will eat, and there will remain more than enough for you when you shall have returned to your senses and will obey." And thus saying, she commenced eating with great avidity. When she had satisfied herself, she rose, went towards the corner, and bending over Lucia, again invited her to eat, and then go to bed.

"No, no, I will have nothing," she replied with a weak and almost drowsy voice. And then, with more resolution, she asked, "is the door fastened? is it well fastened?" After gazing round the room, she rose, and with her hands stretched forward, with an unsteady step she went towards the door.

The old woman hastened there before her, placed her hand upon the bolt, shot it, and said, "Do you hear? do you see? Is it well fastened? Are you satisfied now?"

"Oh, satisfied! satisfied being here?" said Lucia, placing herself again in her corner. "But the Lord knows that I am here!"

“Come to bed; what will you do there, lying on the ground like a dog? Did one ever before see people refuse comforts where they might have them?”

“No, no; let me be.”

“It is you who wish it. See, I leave you the good place, I have laid myself upon the edge; I will incommode myself for you. If you wish to come to bed, you know what you have to do. Recollect that I have begged you many times.” And saying this, she drew herself under the coverlet, and all was silent.

Lucia remained immoveable in her corner, her knees raised, her hands supported upon her knees, and her face concealed in her hands. The state into which she had fallen was neither that of sleep, nor yet of perfect consciousness; but there passed through her mind a rapid succession of painful thoughts, imaginations, and terrors. And now conscious, and recalling more distinctly to herself the horrible things she had seen and suffered this day, she applied herself sorrowfully to consider the obscure and formidable reality in which she found herself an actor; and now again, her mind, transported into a region still more obscure, struggled with phantoms, born of uncertainty and terror. She remained some time in this anguish. At length, however, more wearied and worn out than ever, stretching her benumbed limbs, she laid herself upon the floor, or sank down upon it, and remained some time in a state more resembling true sleep. But all at once she awoke to consciousness, as though at the summons of an inward voice, and felt the desire of arousing herself entirely, of recalling her thoughts, of knowing where she was, and how, and wherefore she came there. She listened with all her attention

to a sound; it was the slow and hoarse breathing of the old woman; she opened wide her eyes, and saw a fiery brightness appear and disappear by turns; it was the wick of the lamp which, upon the point of expiring, shot forth a tremulous light, and then immediately, so to say, drew it back again, like the ebb and flow of a wave upon the shore; and this light, flying the objects before they had received relief and a distinct colour from it, only presented to the view a succession of confused images. But soon, recent impressions resuming their place in her mind, assisted her to distinguish what had been confused to her senses. The unfortunate girl, having awoke, recognised her prison; and all the memories of the horrible past day, all the terrors of the future, assailed her at once; this very quiet even, after so much agitation,—this species of repose,—this solitude in which she was left,—caused her a new terror, and she was overcome by such sorrow that she desired to die. But in this moment she remembered that she could at least pray, and together with this thought there arose in her heart a sudden hope. She again took her chaplet, and recommenced saying her rosary, and gradually, as the prayer issued from her trembling lips, her heart felt increase within it an unlimited confidence. Suddenly another thought crossed her mind, which was that her prayers would be more acceptable and more certainly granted, did she in her desolation present some offering. She recalled that which she held as most precious, or that which had ever been dearest to her; in this moment, her soul could experience no other sentiment than terror, nor conceive any other desire than liberation; she remembered this most precious thing, and resolved

immediately to sacrifice it. She arose, knelt down, and holding clasped upon her breast her hands, from which hung the chaplet, she raised her countenance and eyes towards heaven, and said, "Oh most holy Virgin, thou to whom I have commended myself so often, and who hast so often consoled me! Thou, who hast endured so much sorrow, and now art so glorified, and hast performed so many miracles for us poor suffering ones, aid thou me! Cause me to escape out of this danger; cause me to return safe to my mother; and I vow unto thee to remain a virgin. I will renounce for ever this poor youth, and thus never belong to any other being than thee!"

Having spoken these words, she bowed her head, and placed the chaplet round her neck, at once as a sign of consecration and as a safeguard, as an armour of the new militia in which she had engaged. Having reseated herself on the ground, she felt a certain tranquillity, a deeper confidence enter into her soul. This *to-morrow*, repeated by the powerful Unknown, recurred to her mind; and she seemed to hear in this word a promise of salvation. Her senses, fatigued by all this warfare, were lulled by degrees into calm; and at length, when the dawn was already near, with the name of her protectress upon her lips, Lucia fell into a deep and continuous sleep.

But there was also another person in the same castle, who would have desired to sleep, but who could not. After having left, or rather after having escaped from Lucia, after having ordered her supper, after having paid his customary visit to certain posts in the castle, this image still vividly present to his mind, and with these words resounding in his ears,

the Signor had retired to his chamber, and there, having hastily shut himself in, as though he had to defend himself from a legion of enemies, undressing himself in all haste, he had gone to bed. / But this image, more than ever present to his thoughts, seemed to say to him in this moment, "thou shalt not sleep." —"What foolish womanish curiosity possessed me to see her?" thought he. "This stupid Nibbio was right, one is no longer a man; it is true, one is no longer a man!—*I!*—*I* no longer a man?—*I!* What has happened? What devil has taken possession of me? What is there so new in this? Did I not know before now that women scream? Men also weep sometimes, when they cannot defend themselves. What the devil! have I never before heard women cry?"

And here, without fatiguing himself much in taxing his memory, his memory itself presented him with more than one instance, in which neither prayers nor lamentations had been able to deter him from carrying out his resolutions. But the remembrance of these undertakings was far from giving him that firmness which he required in order to complete this enterprise, was far from extinguishing in his soul this vexatious compassion; there awoke within him a species of terror, an indescribable mad penitence. So that it seemed a relief to turn to the image of Lucia, from which he had sought to free his soul. "She still lives," thought he; "she is here. I am in time; I can say to her, 'go, rejoice;' I can see this countenance change, can also say to her, 'pardon me—pardon me!' *I* demand pardon!—from a woman? —*I?* Ah! and yet! if one word, a word such as

this, could do me good, could free me somewhat from this devilish business, I would say it: ah! I feel that I would say it. Ah! to what am I reduced! I am no longer a man, I am no longer a man!—Come!” he then said, turning himself madly upon this bed become so very hard, under the coverlet which was become so very heavy; “come, this is only nonsense, which has already at former times passed through my mind, and it will pass away this time also.”

And in order to drive this nonsense away, he sought for something of importance to think of, one of those affairs which generally occupied him so entirely, and to which he would now apply himself wholly; but he could not find a single thought of this description. Every thing appeared to him changed; that which formerly had most strongly stimulated his desires was now no longer desirable; passion, like a horse become all at once restive, through fear of a shadow would not advance. When thinking of the undertakings already in hand, but not yet completed, instead of animating himself with the idea of their accomplishments, instead of irritating himself at the obstacles in his path—and anger even at this moment would have appeared agreeable to him,—he only experienced a sadness, almost a terror, at the deeds he had already done. Time spread itself out before him void of every interest, of every occupation, of every wish; alone filled with intolerable memories, all hours appeared similar to the present, which passed thus slowly, thus heavily over his head. In his imagination he made all his ruffians pass before him in review, and he did not find a single command to give them

which was important to him; thus, the idea of seeing them again, of finding himself among them, was a fresh burthen—an annoying and disagreeable idea. And if he desired to discover any occupation for the morrow, any feasible work, he was obliged to think that on the morrow he should be able to set this poor young girl at liberty.

“I will liberate her; yes, as soon as day shall have dawned, I will hasten to her and say, Go, go. I will have her escorted —— And the promise?—and the engagement?—and Don Rodrigo? Who is Don Rodrigo?”

And like a man who is surprised by an unexpected and embarrassing question from a superior, the Unknown immediately thought how he should reply to the question he had demanded of himself,—or rather this new man which had so suddenly grown within him arose as in judgment upon the ancient one. He busied himself therefore in seeking reasons why he had resolved to take upon himself an engagement, almost before he had been besought to do so, by which he must cause this poor unfortunate unknown girl to suffer so much, without any hatred or fear on his part, but merely to serve this Don Rodrigo; but no, he did not succeed in finding any reasons which at this moment appeared to him of sufficient importance to excuse the deed; nay, he could scarcely explain to himself how he had been induced to form such an engagement. This desire, rather than this deliberation, had been an instantaneous movement of the soul, obedient to ancient and habitual sentiments; it was a consequence of a thousand deeds which had preceded it, and the tormenting self-examiner, in

order to account to himself for a single action, found himself engaged in an examination of his whole life. On looking back from year to year, from engagement to engagement, from murder to murder, from villany to villany, each action appeared to his new and now conscious soul separated from the sentiments which at the time had caused him to desire and perform it, each action appeared in its true monstrous shape, a shape which these sentiments had not then allowed him to perceive. All these deeds were his own, they formed the whole of his life. The horror of this thought suggested by each of these images and connected with all, at length became despair. He started up furiously in his bed, and grasped wildly at the neighbouring wall, seized a pistol, and —— at the very moment of ending a life which was become insupportable, his thoughts, surprised by a terror, by a disquiet, carried him into the time which would continue to flow on after his death. He imagined to himself with horror his disfigured lifeless corpse in the power of the most vile of human beings; he pictured the surprise, the confusion, which would reign in the castle the day following, how every thing would be in an uproar; he, without strength, without voice, thrown Heaven knows where! He imagined the conversations which would take place there, in the neighbourhood, afar off, and the joy of his enemies! The very gloom and silence made death seem more sad, more fearful; it seemed to him he should not have hesitated had it been day, had he been in the open air, among people, to have thrown himself into a river and expired. Absorbed in these tormenting contemplations, he continued, with a convulsive

strength of his thumb, to raise and lower the cock of his pistol, when suddenly another thought presented itself to his mind. "If this other life of which they have told me when a boy, of which they always speak as though it were a certain thing; if after all there should be no such life? if it should be an invention of the priests? what then am I doing? Why should I die? what then matters what I have done? It is a foolish thing, my —— But if there should really be another life?"

But, together with this doubt, he was seized with a blacker and more terrible despair, from which he could not escape even by death. He let fall his weapon, and remained, his hands grasped in his hair, trembling, and his teeth chattering. Suddenly, there flashed across his mind those words which he had heard repeated again and again, but a short time before—"God pardons so much for one deed of mercy!" And these words did not return to his remembrance with that accent of humble prayer in which they were spoken, but with a sound full of authority, which suggested a far-off hope. This was a moment of relief: he removed his hands from his temples, and, resting in a more composed attitude, saw in his mind's eye the one who had spoken these words; he saw her not as his prisoner, not as a suppliant, but in the attitude of one who dispenses pardon and consolation. He awaited anxiously the day, that he might hasten and liberate her, that he might hear from her mouth other words of consolation and life; he imagined himself conducting her to her mother. "And then? what shall I do to-morrow, the rest of the day? What shall I do the day after to-morrow,

and the day after that? And then the night! The night, which will return in twelve hours. Oh, the night! No, no; no night ——” And then, sunk in the painful void of the future, he sought in vain an employment for his time—a way to pass his days and his nights. Now he thought of abandoning his castle and going to some far-off country where no one would know him, not even by name; but he felt that he should be always with himself: now there arose within him an indistinct hope that he should recover his old courage, his old will, and that this was merely like a delirium which would pass away; now he dreaded the day, which should exhibit him to his household thus miserably changed; now he sighed for it, as though it would bring light to his clouded mind. And, behold! precisely at the dawn of day, a few moments after Lucia had fallen asleep, whilst he was seated thus immoveable in his bed, there reached his ear a confused sound, but yet, at the same time, a sound full of an indescribable joy! He listened attentively, and recognised the joyous pealing of bells from some distant festival; and then, after a few moments, the echo of the mountain, which repeated faintly the harmony, and mingled itself with it. Soon he heard another peal more near, now another.

“What merriment is this? What have these people to rejoice about?” He sprang from this couch of thorns, half dressed, ran to open a window, and looked forth. The mountains were half veiled in mist, the heaven was rather one ash-coloured cloud than a clouded heaven, but by the dawn, which was breaking, people were to be distinguished on the road in the bottom of the valley, some hastening on,

some issuing forth from their houses, all bending their steps to the same point, towards the mouth of the valley, to the right of the castle, all arrayed in their holiday garb, and all moving forward with an extraordinary alacrity.

“What the devil are these people about? What is there joyous in this cursed country? Whither is all this mob going?” And he called to a confidential bravo who slept in an adjoining chamber, and inquired the cause of all this movement. He, however, knew no more than his master, but replied that he would go and procure information. The Signor remained, leaning out of the window, intently watching the moving spectacle. There were men, women, children, in companies or alone; here one joining himself to another who was gone on before, they would travel on in company; or another issuing forth from his house would unite himself to the first who came up, and they also would proceed together like friends who met by appointment. Their action plainly indicated a common haste and joy, and the sound of these bells more or less distant, not always in unison, yet always agreeable, seemed almost like the voice of these actions, and the spirit of their words, which could not mount thus high. He gazed, and gazed, and there arose within his heart something more than curiosity, to know what thing it might be which could communicate an equal transport to so many different people.

CHAPTER XXII.

SHORTLY afterwards the bravo came, and related that the day before, Cardinal Federigo Borromeo, archbishop of Milan, had arrived at —, and was to stay there the whole of this day; that the news of this, spreading throughout the neighbourhood on the evening of his arrival, had excited the people to go and see this celebrated man; and that the bells were now being rung as much for joy as to give notice of this event to the inhabitants. The Signor, left alone, continued to gaze into the valley still more thoughtfully. “All this for a man!” thought he. “All eager, all happy, to see a man! and yet every one of these beings has his demon which torments him! But not one, not one of them, has such a demon as mine! What is there about this man to make so many people happy? Some money which he will distribute, by chance — But they do not all go to receive alms. Well, some signs made in the air, some words — Oh, if he had only for me the words which could console! if — Why should I not go? Why not? I will go, I will go; and I will speak to him, alone I will speak with him. What shall I say to him? that which, that which — I will hear what he can say, this man!”

Having thus hurriedly formed his resolution, he finished dressing himself in all haste, arraying himself

in one of his coats which had something of a military cut; he took the pistol which remained lying on his bed, and attached it to his girdle on one side; on the other he thrust a second pistol, which he took from a nail in the wall; placed in the same girdle his dagger, and then having removed from the wall a carabine, almost as famous as himself, he slung it crosswise over his shoulder; then took his hat, and issued forth from his chamber. He proceeded first of all to the room where he had left Lucia. Having placed his carabine in an angle near the door, he knocked, letting his voice be heard at the same time. The old woman descended from her bed in one spring, and ran to open the door. The Signor having entered, glared round the room, and saw Lucia, where she lay quietly in her corner.

“Does she sleep?” he demanded in an under-tone of the old woman; “does she sleep there? Were these the orders I gave, wretched woman!”

“I have done every thing possible,” returned the old creature, “but she would not eat, she would not come ——”

“Let her sleep in peace; take care not to disturb her; and when she wakes——Marta shall be in the neighbouring room, and thou must send her for every thing this poor girl may demand. When she wakes, tell her that I —— that the master has gone out for a short time, that he will return, and that —— he will do all that she desires.”

The old woman remained quite stupified, thinking to herself, “this must be some princess!”

The Signor went forth, took his carabine again, sent Marta to wait in the antechamber, sent the first

bravo he met, to keep guard; so that no one but this woman should set foot within the chamber; and then issuing out of the castle, with a hasty step he commenced the descent.

The MS. does not say how far it was from the castle to the village where was the Cardinal; but judging from the facts which we have to relate, it could not be farther than a long walk. This, however, could not be inferred alone from the great concourse of villagers, and even of people living at a greater distance, which hastened to this hamlet; for we find in the histories of those times that people came in crowds the distance of twenty miles, and even farther, to see Federigo.

The braves, who met the Unknown upon the ascent, stopped respectfully as their lord passed, waiting to receive any orders he might choose to give them, or to see whether he would take them with him upon any expedition, and they knew not what to think of his air, and the glance with which he returned their salutations.

When he arrived on the public way, what astonished the passers by was to see him without attendants. Every one made way for him, a way which would have sufficed for the attendants also, and all respectfully raised their hats. When he arrived at the village, he encountered a great crowd; but his name quickly passed from mouth to mouth, and the crowd opened for him. He accosted a man, and demanded where the Cardinal was: "In the Curate's house," he replied, bowed, and pointed out where the house stood. The Signor followed the direction, and entered a small court-yard, where were many priests, who all

gazed at him with an astonished and suspicious attention. He saw opposite to him an open door, which led into a small parlour where many other priests were congregated. He removed his carabine, and placed it in a corner; then he entered the parlour; but here again were glances, whisperings, a name repeated, and silence. He then, turning to one of the company, asked where was the Cardinal, and said he desired to speak with him.

"I am a stranger," replied the one whom he had accosted, and casting a glance around, he called the cross-bearer, who was at this moment standing in a corner of the room, saying in a low voice to one of his companions; "this man? this famous man here? What has this man to do here? Make way!" However at this summons, which resounded through the general silence, he was obliged to come forward; he bowed himself before the Unknown, stood to hear his will, raised his eyes with a restless curiosity to this awful countenance, suddenly lowered them again, remained silent a moment, and then said, or rather stammered; "I do not know whether my illustrious Signor——at this moment——is——may——can——But I will go and see——" and he went much against his will to carry this embassy into the neighbouring apartment where the Cardinal was.

At this place in our history we cannot do less than pause a short time, like a traveller who, wearied and exhausted by a long journey through an arid and savage country, refreshes himself, and loses a little time under the shadow of a fine tree, reposing himself upon the grass, near to a spring of living water. We have here encountered a personage whose name and

memory, let them be presented to the mind at whatever time they may, refresh it with a calm emotion of reverence, and with an agreeable sentiment of sympathy; and now, how much the more is this the case after so many images of pain, after the contemplation of so much vexatious ill-nature! It is absolutely necessary that we expend a few words upon this personage; let those who do not care to hear them, or who are desirous to proceed with our history, pass over to the following chapter.

Federigo Borromeo, born in 1564, was one of those men so rare in all times, who have employed a high genius, all the resources of a large fortune, all the advantages of a privileged condition and a constant application, in the search after good, and in the exercise of it. His life is like a rivulet, which issuing limpid from the rock, without ever pausing or troubling itself during its long course through many territories, pours itself still limpid into the river. In the midst of pleasures and of pomp, he fixed attention from his earliest childhood to those words of self-denial and humility, to those maxims regarding the vanity of pleasure and the injustice of pride, regarding true dignity and true good, maxims which, whether understood or not by the heart, are transmitted from generation to generation in the most elementary instruction of religion. He paid attention, I say, to these words; he regarded them as serious, tried them, and found them true; he saw therefore that the other words and maxims which were opposed, and which were also transmitted from generation to generation with the same certainty, and often by the same lips, could not be true; and he proposed to choose as the rule of his

actions and thoughts, those which were true. Persuaded that life is not destined to be a burthen for the many and a holiday for the few, but that it is an employment for all, of which every one must render an account, he began as a child to consider how he might render his useful and holy.

In the year 1580, he declared his resolution of dedicating himself to the ministry, and received the habit from his cousin Carlo, whom the voice of fame had already universally proclaimed a saint. Shortly after this he entered the college founded by this same cousin in Pavia, and which still bears the name of their family; and there applying himself assiduously to the occupations which he found prescribed, he imposed upon himself two others by his own free will, and these were, teaching the Christian religion to the poorest and most ignorant of the people, and visiting, serving, consoling, and succouring the infirm. He took advantage of the authority which he enjoyed in this place, to induce his companions to second him in works like these; he possessed in every thing which was honest and profitable a pre-eminence which his personal endowments would have been sufficient to give him had he been weak by position. The advantages of another kind, which this position would have been able to procure him, he not only left unsought for, but even studiously avoided. He kept a table which might be sooner called poor than frugal, and clothed himself in a mean rather than simple garment; and, in fact, the whole tenor of his life and behaviour was equally unassuming. But he never once thought of changing his mode of life, however much some of his relatives might exclaim and lament

that he thus degraded the dignity of the house. He had to sustain another warfare, and this, with his instructors, who by stealth sought to confer upon him marks of distinction, something, in short, which should distinguish him from others and cause him to figure as the prince of the place; whether it was that they believed that in the long run they should please him by this means, whether they were induced by that servile love which rejoices and aggrandizes itself in the splendour of others, or whether they belonged to that prudential class who, starting back in horror at virtue as well as vice, always preach that perfection is found between the two extremes, and fix the middle at the precise point where they themselves have arrived and are comfortably stationed. Federigo did not allow himself to be conquered by these temptations, he even blamed those who had tempted him, and all this in his earliest youth.

That Federigo, during the lifetime of the Cardinal Carlo, his elder by six-and-twenty years, in so grave and solemn a presence, thus breathing holiness and recalling so many holy works, to which, had this been needed, the constant and fervent obsequiousness of the by-standers would have added authority; that Federigo, I say, as child and youth, should endeavour to conform himself to the behaviour and opinions of such a superior, is certainly not to be wondered at; but it is certainly a remarkable thing, that, after the death of this pious man, no one could ever perceive that Federigo, then twenty years of age, ever stood in need of a guide or a censor. The increasing fame of his genius, of his doctrine and piety, his parentage, and the interest of more than one powerful Cardinal,

his very name to which Carlo had annexed in every mind an idea of holiness and pre-eminence, all that which ought, and all that which can, conduct men to ecclesiastical dignities, concurred in prognosticating such for him. But he, persuaded in his heart of what no one who professes Christianity can deny with his mouth, that a man can have no just superiority over other men, except by devoting himself to their service, dreaded all ecclesiastical dignities, and sought to avoid them; this was most certainly not in order to fly the obligation of serving others, for few lives were so constantly employed in such duties as his, but because he did not esteem himself sufficiently worthy or capable of filling these high and dangerous offices. It was on this account, therefore, that when Clement VIII. proposed to him in the year 1595 the Archbishoprick of Milan, he appeared greatly disturbed, and refused it without hesitation. He afterwards, however, yielded, at the express command of the Pope.

Such demonstrations, as every one knows, are neither difficult nor rare. And hypocrisy requires no greater exertion of talent to make them, than raillery to deride them upon every occasion. But do they on this account cease to be the natural expressions of a virtuous and wise sentiment? Life is the touchstone of the words; and words which express such a sentiment, even should they pass over the lips of all the impostors and jesters in the world, will always be beautiful, are they preceded and followed by a life of disinterestedness and sacrifice.

Federigo, when archbishop, made it his peculiar study never to employ for himself, riches, time, his

office, anything connected with himself, in short, unless it were strictly necessary. He said, as all say indeed, that the ecclesiastical revenues are the patrimony of the poor; how he put this maxim into practice, we shall see. He desired that his own expenses and those of his domestics should be calculated; and being informed that they amounted to six hundred scudi (the name scudo was then given to that gold coin which, retaining the same weight, was afterwards called Zecchino), he commanded that such a sum should be every year reckoned out of his private funds, and placed with the Archbishop's revenue, not considering it was lawful for so rich a man as himself to live upon this patrimony. Of his own, he was such a penurious and careful economist for himself, that he was careful never to cast off a garment until it was entirely worn out; he joined to this spirit of simplicity, as is noticed by contemporary writers, an exquisite cleanliness; two habits very worthy of notice in that filthy and ostentatious age. In the same spirit, in order that nothing should be lost of his frugal table, he bestowed the remains upon a hospital of the poor; and one of these wretched beings, by his order, entered every day the dining-hall, to collect all that remained. These petty cases might perhaps lead us to imagine his was a niggardly, wretched, anxious sort of virtue, his a mind in love with minutiae, incapable of elevated design, were it not for this Biblioteca Ambrosiana, which still exists, the idea of which Federigo conceived with such extreme magnificence, and erected at such expense. To furnish this library with books and manuscripts, beside the present he made of those which he had himself collected with

great care and expense; he sent eight men, the most learned and clever he could meet with, to purchase books in Italy, France, Spain, Germany, Flanders, in Greece, Lebanon, and Jerusalem. He succeeded in collecting about thirty thousand printed works, and forty thousand manuscripts. He united to this library a college of doctors. There were nine of them who received pensions from him as long as he should live; afterwards, the ordinary revenues, not sufficing for this expense, the number was reduced to two. Their office was to cultivate various branches of learning, theology, history, polite literature, ecclesiastical antiquities, and the Oriental languages, each one being obliged to publish some work upon the materials assigned him,—to this also he united a college, called by him the Trilingue, for the study of the Greek, Latin, and Italian languages. This was a college where pupils were instructed in these sciences and languages, in order some day to teach in their turn. To this college was added also a printing establishment for the Oriental languages,—that is, of the Hebrew, Chaldee, the Arabian, the Persian, and the Armenian; a gallery of paintings, another of statuary, and a school for the three principal arts of design. For the latter, he could easily find professors already educated; we have seen how much trouble the search after books and manuscripts had given him; and most difficult, certainly, must it have been to discover the types for these languages, then much less cultivated in Europe than at the present day; and perhaps to find men who understood them would be the most difficult of all. Suffice it to say that, of these nine doctors, eight had been chosen from among the young pupils of the

seminary; and from this circumstance, one can easily infer what judgment was passed upon the completed studies and achieved reputations of that time; a judgment which appears to have been similar to the one posterity seems to have pronounced upon them, by casting them both into forgetfulness. Among the rules which he established for the use and government of the library is to be observed a desire for perpetual usefulness, not alone beautiful in itself, but in many instances wise and noble, and far beyond the ideas and general customs of the time. He ordered the librarian to maintain a correspondence with the most learned men of Europe, so as to receive information from them regarding the state of the sciences, to gain intelligence of the best books which appeared in every branch, and to procure them; he ordered also that all citizens or foreigners shall have sufficient time and opportunity given them to make use of the books. An intention such as this will appear to every one now only natural and consonant with the foundation of a library; in those days, however, it was not. And in a history of the Ambrosian Library, written (with the construction and usual elegance of the century) by a Pierpaolo Bosca, who was librarian after the death of Federigo, it is expressly noticed as a singular thing that in this library, founded by a private individual, and almost entirely at his own expense, the books were exposed to the public view, brought to whoever asked for them, that even seats to sit upon were offered to the public, with paper, pens, and ink, to take notes; whilst in all the other great Italian libraries, not only were the books invisible, but were locked up in cupboards, whence they never were

removed, unless through especial favour of the librarians, who would perhaps allow these to be seen for a moment; but as for giving the public an opportunity of studying, there was not yet even an idea of it! To enrich libraries after this manner was only to remove books from common use; one of those kinds of cultivation, of which there were at that time, and of which there always are so many, a cultivation which renders the field only more sterile.

Do not demand what have been the effects of this foundation of Borromeo upon public instruction. It would be easy to demonstrate in two phrases, after the manner people demonstrate, that the effects were miraculous, or that they had no effect. To search and explain to a certain point what really the effects have been, would be a very fatiguing thing, of but little use, and out of place. But think what a generous, what a wise, what a benevolent, what a persevering lover of human amendment, must have been the one who desired such a thing, desired it after this manner, and executed it in the midst of murmurs of: "What does it matter?—Are there no other things to think about?—What a fine invention!" and similar exclamations, which would certainly be more numerous than the scudi spent by him upon the undertaking; and these were five hundred thousand.

To pronounce such a man extremely beneficent and liberal, it would not be necessary that he should spend a deal of money in immediate succour of the poor; but yet there are many people who think that expenses of this kind, and I will say expenses of all kinds, are the best and most useful alms. Federigo, however, considered alms, properly bestowed, a principal duty;

and here, as in every thing else, his deeds were consistent with his opinions. His life was a constant almsgiving to the poor; and with reference to this famine, of which our history has already spoken, we shall have occasion to relate some instances of this, which will shew what wisdom and gentleness he knew how to employ in his liberality. We will only relate a single example of generosity from the numerous ones his biographers have recorded. Having learned that a noble was employing artifice and force to persuade one of his daughters to turn nun, who desired rather to marry, he sent for the father; and having drawn from his mouth the confession that the real motive for this torture was that he had not four thousand scudi, which according to him, he must have to marry his daughter respectably, he endowed her with the four thousand scudi. Perhaps to some of my readers this may appear an excessive liberality, a liberality not well considered, too condescending towards the silly caprices of a proud father; and that four thousand scudi might have been better employed in a hundred ways. To this we have nothing to reply, except that it would be desirable to see often excesses of a virtue, thus free from the ruling opinions of the age (every age has its own), thus independent of the general tendency, as, in this instance, was that which induced a man to give four thousand scudi, because a girl would not turn nun.

The inexhaustible charity of this man shone forth, not alone in his deeds, but also in the whole of his behaviour. Easy of access, he believed it especially his duty to shew a pleasant countenance, an affectionate courtesy to those who are called the lower

class; all the more so, as they meet with but little courtesy in this world.. And here even he had to combat with gentlemen of the *ne quid nimis*, who would have had him keep within bounds, that is within their bounds. One day, during one of his visits in a wild and mountainous region, Federigo was instructing some poor children, and in the midst of his questions and instruction, he lovingly caressed them, when one of these gentlemen advised him to take better heed how he caressed these children, as they were too filthy and loathsome; now, we must suppose that either this good man, this Federigo, had not sense sufficient to make such a discovery, or not penetration enough to discover by himself this clever reason. Such is, at certain times, the misfortune of men full of goodness, that whilst there are found very few persons who inform them of their failings, courageous people are not wanting to reprimand them for their good deeds. But the good Bishop replied, not however without a certain resentment, "These are souls intrusted to me; they will, perhaps, never again see my countenance, and you wish me not to embrace them!"

But resentment was, however, very rare in him, who was admired for the gentleness of his temper, for an imperturbable calm, which one would have attributed to an extraordinarily happy temperament; but this was only the effect of constant discipline upon a warm resentful nature. If sometimes he shewed himself severe, even harsh, it was with the inferior clergy whom he discovered guilty of avarice, of neglect, or of other vices diametrically opposed to the spirit of their noble ministry. But in every thing regarding

his own interest, or his own temporal glory, he never exhibited the slightest sign of joy or regret, of ardour or agitation. Not alone did he carry away with him, from many conclaves which he had attended, the reputation of never having aspired to that post so much desired by ambition, and so terrible to piety; but once, when one of his colleagues who had considerable influence came to offer him his vote and the votes of his faction—it is an ugly word, but it was then in use—Federigo refused such a proposition in such a manner that the other changed his mind, and turned his steps elsewhere. This same modesty, this aversion to pre-eminence, shewed themselves equally in the more common events of his life. Attentive and indefatigable in persuading and governing, where he felt that it was his duty so to do, he always carefully avoided busying himself in the affairs of others; thus he excused himself with all his might when his intervention was sought; a discretion and modesty not common, as every one knows, in men zealous for good; and such a one was Federigo.

If we allowed ourselves the pleasure of collecting all the notable traits in his character, there would most certainly result a singular complication of merits, apparently opposed to each other, and certainly rarely to be found existing together. However, we must not omit to notice one other singularity in this beautiful life. Filled as this life was with activity, important cares, his religious duties, instruction, audiences, visits to his diocese, journeys, controversies; not alone did study form a portion, but a portion which would have been sufficient for any literary man by profession. And, in fact, besides so many other different

titles of praise, Federigo even enjoyed among his contemporaries the title of a learned man.

We must not however dissimulate that he held with a firm persuasion, and maintained in practice, with great constancy, opinions, which at the present day would sooner appear to every one strange, than ill-founded; I will say, even to those who might have a great desire to find them good. Whoever should desire to defend him in this respect, would have the very current and accepted excuse,—that these were the errors of the time rather than his own; an excuse, which for certain things, and when it is drawn from a particular examination of facts, may have some value; but which applied nakedly and foolishly, as is commonly done, signifies properly nothing. And, therefore, not wishing to solve with simple words this complicated question, neither desiring too much to lengthen this episode, we will desist from exposing them; contenting ourselves with having thus hastily hinted, that in a man so admirable a compound of good qualities, every thing, however, was not equally perfect; so that it may not appear that we have wished to write his funeral oration.

It is not certainly doing our readers injustice to suppose that some one among them asks, whether, with all this genius and all this study, the Cardinal has not left some monument behind him? Whether he has left any! About a hundred are the works of his which remain—large and small, Latin and Italian, printed and in manuscript, all preserved in the library which he founded; moral treatises, orations, dissertations on history and on antiquity, both sacred and profane, on literature, on the fine arts, and on other subjects.

And how happens it, the reader will exclaim, that so many works are thus forgotten, or at least so little known, so little inquired after? How happens it, with so much genius, so much study, so much practical knowledge of men and things, with so much meditation, with such a passion for the good and beautiful, with so much candour of soul, with so many other qualities which make great authors, that this man has not, among a hundred volumes, left behind him one of those which are considered superior even by people who do not entirely approve them, and the titles of which are known by those who do not read the works themselves?

The question is reasonable, doubtless, and the subject a very interesting one; but the causes of this phenomenon will be discovered in the observation of many general facts; and when they are discovered, will lead to the explanation of other similar phenomena; but these explanations would be many and prolix, and then, if they should not please you, if they should make you turn up your nose? Therefore it will be better that we resume the thread of our history, and instead of longer gossiping about this man, that we, with the guidance of our author, hasten to see him act.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CARDINAL FEDERIGO, whilst waiting for the hour when he should proceed to church, there to celebrate divine service, was studying, as was his custom to do in all his leisure moments, when the Chaplain cross-bearer entered with a disturbed countenance.

“A strange visit, strange in truth, my illustrious Signor!”

“Who is it?” demanded the Cardinal.

“No one less than the Signor ——,” returned the Chaplain; and distinctly pronouncing the syllables with great signification, he spoke that name which we have not been able to write for our readers. And then he added, “And he is here himself in person, and asks nothing less than to be introduced to your illustrious lordship.”

“He!” said the Cardinal, with an animated countenance, closing his book and rising from his seat; “let him come, let him come immediately.”

“But ——,” replied the Chaplain, without moving, “your illustrious lordship ought to know who this is, this outlaw, this famous ——”

“And is it not a good fortune for a bishop, that the desire to visit him has arisen in the mind of such a man?”

“But ——” insisted the Chaplain; “we never dare speak of certain things, for my lord says, that

all this is foolish gossip; however, when the thing arrives, it seems to me it is a duty — Zeal makes many enemies, my lord; and we know positively that more than one villain has dared to boast, that one day or other ——”

“And what have they done?” interrupted the Cardinal.

“I say that this man is an instigator of crime, a desperate character, who stands in correspondence with maddened desperadoes, and that he may be sent ——”

“Oh, what discipline is this,” interrupted Federigo, again smiling, “that the soldiers exhort the general to have fear?” Then, becoming serious and thoughtful, he continued: “San Carlo would never have found himself debating whether he ought to receive such a man, he would have gone in search of him. Let him enter immediately; he has waited already too long.”

The Chaplain moved away, saying to himself,— “There is no remedy; all these holy men are so obstinate.”

Having opened the door, and presented himself in the apartment where were the Signor and the company, he saw the priests had retired into one corner, and were whispering and glancing at the Unknown, who was left alone in another corner. He went towards him, and examining him as well as he could, without looking him full in the face, thought what weapons he might have concealed under his cloak, and that really, before introducing him, he ought at least to propose —— but he could not resolve to do so. He accosted him, and said, “My lord expects

your lordship, be pleased to follow me." And preceding him through the little crowd, which immediately opened a way for them both, he cast glances to the right and left, which signified, "What would you have? Do you not all of you know, as well as myself, that this holy man always has his own way?"

Scarcely was the Unknown introduced than Federigo hastened towards him with a serene and joyous air, with open arms, as though to receive a much desired person, and immediately signed to the Chaplain to retire, which sign he obeyed.

The two remained some time without speaking, and both were undecided, although both were influenced by different reasons. The Unknown, who had been, as it were, driven there by force, by an inexplicable madness, rather than by any determined design, remained there, as it were, by force, torn by two conflicting passions—the desire and confused hope of finding a refuge from his inward tormentor, and a kind of anger and shame at having come there like a penitent, like a miserable man full of submission, come to confess himself guilty, and to implore pardon; he could not find words—he scarcely sought for them. However, raising his eyes to the countenance of the holy Archbishop, he felt himself even more penetrated with a sentiment of veneration, at once all-powerful and gentle, which, whilst it increased his confidence, lessened his spite, and without affronting his pride abated it, or, we might almost say, imposed silence upon it.

The person of Federigo was, indeed, one of those which announce a superiority, and make, at the same time, this superiority beloved. His carriage was

naturally modest, and almost involuntarily majestic, neither was he bowed, nor had become less active by the weight of years; he had grave, yet lively, eyes, and a serene and thoughtful brow; spite of the whiteness of his locks, of his paleness, still among the signs of abstinence, meditation, and fatigue, might be traced a species of youthful bloom. All his features indicated that in an earlier period of life he would have been endowed with that which is most properly termed beauty; the habit of solemn and benevolent thought, the inward peace of a long life, love of the human race, the constant joy of an ineffable hope, had now substituted, in the place of youthful beauty, the beauty of old age—a beauty which shone forth yet more splendidly in the magnificent simplicity of the purple.

He riveted his penetrating glance for some moments on the countenance of the Unknown, a glance long exercised in reading the thoughts of men in their exterior; and under this gloomy and cloudy air, it appeared to him he discovered gradually something similar to the hope he had conceived at the first announcement of such a visitor, and all animated, he said, “Oh! what a precious visit this is! And how much ought I to be grateful to you for so good a resolution, although it is for me a little reproach.”

“Reproach!” exclaimed the Signor, much astonished, but yet softened by these words and behaviour, and at the same time satisfied that the Cardinal should have broken the ice, and commenced any kind of a discourse.

“Certainly, a reproach,” replied the other, “that I should have allowed you to be the first to come;

when so long ago, when many a time before now, I ought to have gone to you!"

"To me, you! Do you know who I am? Have they told you my name?"

"And does it seem to you that I should experience the pleasure which I feel, and which manifests itself in my appearance, at the announcement of an unknown visitor? It is you who make me experience it; you, I say, whom I ought to have sought out; you, whom I have at least loved and wept over, and for whom I have prayed; you, the one of my children (and I love them all from my heart) whom I should have most desired to see and embrace, if I had believed I might hope such a thing. But God alone knows how to work miracles, he makes up for the weakness, for the slowness, of his poor servants."

The Unknown stood filled with astonishment, hearing this warm address, these words, which responded so entirely to that which he had not yet said, and which he had not yet determined to say, and moved, yet confounded, he stood in silence. "And how?" resumed Federigo, still more affectionately; "you have good news to communicate to me, and yet you make me wait thus long?"

"Good news! I?—I have hell in my heart; and I shall yet tell you good news! Tell me, if you know, what this good news is, which you expect from one like me."

"That God has touched your heart, and desires to make you one of His servants," replied the Cardinal, calmly.

"God, God, God! If I could see him! If I could see him! Where is this God?"

“ You demand this from me—you? And who has felt this presence more than you? Have you not felt Him in your heart; something which oppresses you, which agitates you; something which does not leave you a moment’s repose, but which at the same time attracts you; which gives you a presentiment of a calm, of a consolation; of a consolation which will be complete, immense, as soon as you shall have recognised Him, confessed Him, implored Him?”

“ Oh, certainly; I have something here which oppresses me, which devours me! But God! If it is this God, if it is the one they speak of, what would you have Him do with me?”

These words were spoken with an accent of desperation; but Federigo, with a solemn tone, as though with calm inspirations, replied, “ What can God do with you? what He will do? A sign of His power and goodness; He will obtain from you a glory which no one else could give Him. From you, against whom the world has cried so long; through you, whose deeds are cursed by thousands and thousands of voices——” The Unknown trembled, and remained astonished at hearing such unusual language, and became yet more astonished upon finding that they not only occasioned him no anger, but rather a relief. “ What glory,” continued Federigo, “ may not reach God. These are cries of terror, are cries of interest; cries perhaps of justice, but of a justice so easy, so natural! Amidst those who accuse you, there are some perhaps—there are only, alas! too many such—who are animated by a jealousy of the miserable power which you have exercised, of the deplorable security of mind which you have preserved until to-day. But when you

yourself rise and condemn your life, and accuse yourself, then, ah! then God will be glorified. And you ask what God can do for you! Who am I, poor mortal, that I should know what profit God may henceforth draw from you? what He may do with this impetuous will, this immoveable constancy, when He shall have animated, warmed it with love, with hope, with repentance? Who are you, poor mortal, to believe that you have been able to imagine and execute greater evil than God is able to make you desire and perform good? What God can do with you? Whether he can pardon you? can save you? and whether he can accomplish in you the work of redemption? Are not these magnificent things, and worthy of Him? Oh, think! If I, a weak human being, a miserable sinner, and so full of myself; if I, such as I am, rejoice now so much over your salvation, that to obtain it I would give with joy—God is my witness—the few days which yet remain to me, oh, think! how much love must He have who has inspired me with a love thus lively, although so imperfect; how much the Being loves you, how much He desires for you, when He inspires me with a love for you which devours me?”

Whilst these words issued from his lips, his countenance, his glance, his every movement, breathed their meaning. The countenance of his listener, before agitated and convulsed, at first became astonished and intent; then his features exhibited an emotion more profound and less full of anguish; his eyes, which from his infancy had known no tears, were suffused; when the words had ceased, he covered his face with his hands, and burst into a flood of tears, which was his clearest reply.

“Great and good God!” exclaimed Federigo, raising his hands and eyes towards heaven, “what have I done; a useless servant, a slumbering shepherd, that thou shouldst have called me to the banquet of grace; why shouldst thou have made me worthy to assist at so joyful a miracle!” Saying this, he stretched forth his hand to take the hand of the Unknown.

“No!” cried he, “no; far, far from me! do not defile this innocent and beneficent hand. You do not know all that has been done by the one you would grasp.”

“Let me,” said Federigo, taking it with an affectionate violence, “let me press this same hand, which will repair so many wrongs, which will distribute so many benefits, which will console so many afflicted ones, which will extend itself unarmed, peacefully, humbly, to so many enemies.”

“It is too much!” said the Unknown, sobbing. “Leave me, my lord; good Federigo, leave me. A crowd of people await you; many good souls, many innocent creatures are come from far to see you, for once to hear you; — and you converse here, with whom!”

“Let us leave the ninety and nine sheep,” replied the Cardinal; “they are in security upon the mountain; I wish now to remain with the one who went astray. Perhaps these souls are now happier than if they saw their poor bishop. Perhaps God, who has worked in you this miracle of mercy, may penetrate them with a joy of which they may not at present feel the cause. His people are perhaps unconsciously united with us; perhaps the Holy Ghost animates their hearts with a

fervent ardour of love, and inspires them with a prayer for you, which He will grant; with a thanksgiving perhaps, of which you who are the object are not yet aware." And saying this, he threw his arms round the neck of the Unknown, who, after having resisted for a moment and endeavoured to free himself, yielded, and as though conquered by this impetuous love, embraced the Cardinal, and concealed upon his shoulders his agitated and altered countenance. His hot tears fell upon the uncontaminated purple of Federigo, and the pure hands of the Archbishop affectionately pressed this person, and this cloak, accustomed to bear and conceal arms of violence and treason.

The Unknown, freeing himself from this embrace, again covered his eyes with one hand, and raising his face, exclaimed, "O God, truly great! God, truly good! I now know myself, I comprehend what I am; my iniquities stand before me; I have fear of myself; yet ——! yet, I experience a consolation, a joy; yes, a joy which I have never before experienced in this my horrible life!"

"It is a sentiment," said Federigo, "which God gives you, in order to captivate you for his service, to animate you to enter resolutely this new life, in which you will have so much to undo, so much to repair, so much to weep over!"

"Unfortunate that I am!" exclaimed the Signor, "how many, many things there are over which I can only weep! But, at least, there are some enterprises which are scarcely commenced, and which I can, if nothing more, at once abandon in the middle; there is one which I can abandon now, undo, repair."

Federigo became attentive; and the Unknown

recounted briefly, but with words of execration even stronger than we have adopted, the violence offered to Lucia; the terrors, the sufferings of the poor girl; how she had implored, the frenzy which these supplications had excited within him, and how she was still in the castle.

“Ah, do not let us lose time!” exclaimed Federigo, panting with pity and solicitude. “Blessed are you! This is a pledge of the pardon of God! God causes you to become an instrument of salvation to the one to whom you would have been an instrument of ruin. God blesses you! God has blessed you. Do you know from what part of the country our unfortunate is?”

The Unknown named Lucia’s village.

“It is not far from here,” said the Cardinal; “praised be God; and probably ——” Saying this, he ran to a small table, and rang a bell. Immediately entered the Chaplain cross-bearer, and first of all glancing at the Unknown, and seeing this altered countenance, and these eyes red with weeping, he looked at the Cardinal, and spite of his composure, discerning in his countenance something of solemn pleasure, and yet eager impatience, he would have remained standing with his mouth wide open, had not the Cardinal suddenly roused him from his meditation by demanding whether, among the curates assembled in the next room, there was the curate of ——.

“He is there, my illustrious Signor,” replied the Chaplain.

“Let him come here immediately,” said Federigo, “and with him the clergyman of this church.”

The Chaplain retired, and when he entered the apartments in which all the priests were assembled, all

eyes were directed towards him. He, with his mouth still open, astonishment painted on his countenance, raising his hands, and moving them in the air, cried, "Ah! gentlemen, gentlemen! *hæc mutatio dexteræ Excelsi*;" and paused a moment; then changing his tone, he added, "his very illustrious and reverend lordship desires to see the Signor Curato of this parish, and the Signor Curato of——"

The first named immediately came forward, and at the same moment there was heard to proceed from the middle of the crowd, an "I?" long drawn out, and pronounced in a tone of astonishment.

"Are not you the Signor Curato of——?" replied the Chaplain.

"Yes, certainly; but ——"

"His very illustrious and reverend lordship desires to see you."

"Me?" again said this voice, plainly signifying by this monosyllable, "what can I have to do with this?" But this time, together with the voice, came forth the man, Don Abbondio, in person, who advanced with a constrained step, and with an air expressing something between astonishment and vexation. The Chaplain gave him a sign with his hand, which was intended to say, "Come with us; come, is it so difficult?" And preceding the two curates, he went towards the door, opened it, and introduced them.

The Cardinal let go the hand of the Unknown, with whom he had in the meantime been concerting what ought to be done; he withdrew a little, and called towards him by a sign, the curate of the church. He told him briefly the affair, and asked whether he could immediately find a good woman

who would go in a litter to the castle to fetch Lucia; a woman who would have head and heart enough to know how to manage an expedition thus unusual, who would assume manners the most likely to tranquillise, and employ words the best adapted to encourage the poor girl, whose liberation even, after so much anguish, so much disquiet, might cause her a fresh terror. Having reflected a moment, the curate said he knew such a person, and went out. The Cardinal, with another sign, summoned the Chaplain to him, and ordered him to have immediately prepared a litter and attendants, and to command two mules also to be saddled. The Chaplain having now departed, he turned towards Don Abbondio.

Who, having placed himself near the Cardinal, so as to keep at a distance from the other gentleman, cast a glance first towards one, and then towards another, trying to imagine what all this could mean, and then, approaching nearer, made a reverence, and said, "they have signified to me, that your illustrious lordship desired to see me; but I believe they have made a mistake."

"They have made no mistake," replied Federigo. "I have good intelligence to give you, and at the same time to confer upon you a consolatory and agreeable office. One of your flock, whom you will have wept over as lost—Lucia Mondella—is found, and is near here, in the house of this gentleman, my dear friend; and you will now go with him, and with a woman whom the curate of this parish is gone in search of—you will go, I say, to fetch this your young friend, and accompany her here."

Don Abbondio did all in his power to conceal the

annoyance, what do I say?—the torment, the martyrdom, which such a proposition, such an order, caused him; and not having time to dissemble an expression of vexation already formed on his face, he concealed it by profoundly bowing his head in sign of obedience, and only raised it again to make another profound reverence, casting a piteous look, which said, “I am in your hands, have mercy, *parcere subjectis*.”

The Cardinal then inquired from him what relations Lucia had.

“She has no near relative, except her mother, with whom she lives,” replied Don Abbondio.

“And is her mother in her native village?”

“Yes, my lord.”

“Since,” replied Federigo, “this poor girl cannot immediately be restored to her home, it would be a great consolation to her, to see her mother; therefore, if the Signor Curato of this place does not arrive before I go to church, do me the favour to tell him to find a cart, or a horse, and send a prudent man in search of this woman, and let him conduct her here.”

“If I were to go myself?” said Don Abbondio.

“No, no, not you; I have already begged you to do something else,” replied the Cardinal.

“I proposed myself,” replied Don Abbondio, “in order that I might prepare the poor mother. She is a woman with great sensibilities; and it is necessary to have a person who knows her, and who will be able to manage her humour, so as not to do evil instead of good.”

“And it is on this account that I beg you to inform the Signor Curato that he must choose a suitable man;

you will be more useful in another place," replied the Cardinal. He would have said, this poor young girl has much more need to see immediately a well-known face, a safe person, in this castle, after so many hours of terror, and when she is still in such uncertainty regarding the future; but these were not reasons to be thus clearly assigned before this third person. It appeared, however, strange to the Cardinal that Don Abbondio had not comprehended this from his air; and so out of place appeared to him this proposal and obstinacy, that he thought there must be something concealed. He looked Don Abbondio in the face, and then easily discovered his terror at travelling with this tremendous man, at entering this house, even for a few moments. Wishing, therefore, entirely to dissipate these cowardly fears, and yet not liking to draw aside the curate and whisper secretly to him whilst his new friend was present, he thought that the best means to do this was to speak to the Unknown himself, so that Don Abbondio might learn by his answers that he was no longer a man to stand in fear of. He approached, therefore, the Unknown, and with that air of spontaneous confidence which is to be found in a new and strong affection, as well as in an old friendship, said, "Do not think that I shall be satisfied for to-day with this visit. You will return, will you not, in company with this worthy ecclesiastic?"

"Whether I shall return?" replied the Unknown. "Even should you refuse to receive me, I should remain obstinately at your door, like a beggar. I have need to speak with you. I have need to hear you—to see you. I have need of you."

Federigo took his hand, pressed it, and said, "Will you do me the favour then to stay and dine with me. I shall expect you. Meanwhile I will go and pray and return thanks with these people; and you will go and gather the first fruits of mercy."

Don Abbondio, when he had heard these demonstrations of affection, was like a child who sees a man caressing in safety his great, rough, savage dog, with red eyes, and its notorious name for biting and causing terror, and yet hears this man tell his master that his dog is a good beast, quiet, very quiet; the child looks at the master, and neither contradicts nor approves; looks at the dog, and dares not approach him, lest the good beast should shew his teeth, although this were only in play; he does not dare to withdraw lest he should appear a coward, and says in his heart, "Oh that I were at home!"

The Cardinal, who was about to retire, still holding by the hand the Unknown, and conducting him along with him, cast another glance at the poor man, who remained behind, mortified, discontented, and making a long face without intending to do so. He thought perhaps that he was vexed that greater attention had not been paid him, that he had been left in a corner as it were, more especially in the presence of a criminal thus well received and caressed; therefore the Archbishop turned towards him in passing, paused a moment, and with a friendly smile said to him, "Signor Curato, you are always with me in the house of our good Father; but this one — this one, *perierat, et inventus est.*"

"Oh, how much I rejoice!" exclaimed Don Abbondio, making a low reverence to both.

The Archbishop went forward, pushed the door, and the two folding-doors being immediately thrown open by two servants who stood one on each side, the admirable pair were exhibited to the desiring gaze of the clergy assembled in the adjoining room. Here they beheld two countenances upon which was depicted a different emotion, but an emotion equally profound; there was in the venerable aspect of the Cardinal a tenderness of gratitude, a humble joy; in that of the Unknown, a shame tempered by consolation, a new modesty, a remorse, through which, however, always shewed itself the vigour of his wild and severe nature. It was afterwards known, that this passage from Isaiah had occurred to the mind of more than one spectator, "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid." Behind them came Don Abbondio, to whom no one paid any attention.

When they had reached the middle of the room, the Cardinal's groom of the chamber approached him, to say, that he had executed the orders communicated to him by the Chaplain, that the litter and the two mules were ready, and that they now only waited for the woman whom the Curate should bring with him. The Cardinal told him, that, as soon as he should arrive, he should immediately speak with Don Abbondio, and that then all should depend upon the commands of Don Abbondio and the Unknown; saying which, he again pressed the hand of the last-mentioned person in sign of leave-taking, and again said, "I shall expect you." He then turned to salute Don Abbondio, and directed his steps towards the church. The clergy followed

him rather in a crowd than in a procession, and the two travelling companions remained alone behind in the room.

The Unknown was absorbed in himself, thoughtful, and impatient for the moment to come, when he should deliver his Lucia from pain and imprisonment—*his* Lucia, now in a very different sense in which she had been his the day before; but his countenance expressed a concentrated agitation, which to the suspicious eye of Don Abbondio might easily appear something worse. He looked at him, and would have liked to commence a friendly conversation with him; but “what should he say to him?” thought he to himself; “ought I tell him how rejoiced I am? That I am rejoiced about what? that he, having been until now a demon, has resolved to become a respectable man like other people? A fine compliment that! Ah! in whatever way I might rejoice myself, my congratulation would mean nothing else. And even should it be true that he has become an honest man thus all at once! Such demonstrations as these are very common in the world, and are made for many reasons! How I do know?—sometimes — and in the meanwhile I have to go with him! to his castle! O what a thing! what a thing! what a thing! Who could have told me this, this morning! Ah, if I do but escape in safety, the Signora Perpetua shall hear from me for having thus driven me here by force out of my church, and this, too, when it was not necessary; saying, that all the curates of the neighbourhood, and even those from afar, were coming, and that one must not remain behind, and this, and that, and the other; and to embark me in an affair of this

kind! O unfortunate that I am! Yet one must say something to this man!" He thought, and thought again, and had at length found something which he could say,—“I should never have expected the good fortune of finding myself in such respectable company,” and was ready to open his mouth, when the groom of the chamber entered with the Curate of the village, who announced that the woman was already seated in the litter, and then turned to Don Abbondio, to receive from him the Cardinal's other commission. Don Abbondio acquitted himself of this duty as well as he was able in his present confused state of mind; and then approaching the attendant, said, “Give me, at least, a quiet beast, for, to say the truth, I am but a poor horseman.”

“Be easy,” replied the man with a half smile; “it is the mule of the secretary, who is a learned man.”

“That is sufficient,” replied Don Abbondio, and continued to think, — “Heaven sends me many blessings!”

The Signor had prepared to depart at the first intelligence, but, having reached the door, he perceived that Don Abbondio had remained behind. He paused to wait for him, and when he arrived in great haste, and with an air which seemed to beg pardon, the Signor bowed, and with a courteous and humble demeanour made Don Abbondio pass out before him—a circumstance which somewhat restored the courage of the poor unfortunate. But scarcely had he set foot in the court-yard before he saw a novelty which entirely destroyed this small consolation; he saw the Unknown go towards a corner, take

the barrel of his carabine in one hand, the strap in the other, and with a quick movement, as though he were performing a military exercise, sling the carabine over his shoulder.

“Oh! oh! oh!” thought Don Abbondio; “what will he do with this instrument? Fine discipline this for a converted man! And if any whim should seize him? Oh, what an expedition! Oh, what an expedition!”

If the Signor could have had the least suspicion in the world of the nature of the thoughts which were passing through his companion’s mind, it would be impossible to say what he would not have done to reassure him; but he was very far from suspecting such a thing, and Don Abbondio was careful not to make a single movement which should clearly say, “I do not trust your lordship.” When they reached the street-door, they found the two mules all ready prepared, and the Unknown leaped upon the one which was presented him by a stable-boy.

“She has no vicious tricks?” Don Abbondio demanded of the groom of the chamber, placing again on the ground the foot he had raised towards the stirrup.

“Only mount with a good heart; she is a very lamb.” Don Abbondio, with the assistance of the groom, mounts up to the saddle, and up, up, up, and now he is seated.

The litter, which was a few paces in advance, drawn by two mules, moved off at the voice of the driver, and the train departed.

It was necessary to pass before the church, which was crowded with people, through a small square,

which was also filled by the peasants of the neighbourhood, and by strangers who had not been able to enter the church. Already the important news had spread; and at the appearance of the train, at the appearance of this man who, but a few hours before an object of terror and execration, was now become an object of agreeable astonishment, there arose among the crowd a murmur almost of applause, and making way for him, they yet, at the same time, pressed forward so as to see him near. The litter passed on, the Unknown passed on; and arrived before the open door of the church, he raised his hat, and bowed this much-feared brow almost to the mane of his mule, amidst the confused hum of a hundred voices which cried, "God bless you!" Don Abbondio also raised his hat, and bowed himself, recommending his soul to heaven; but hearing the solemn concert of his brethren, who sang without interruption, he experienced an envy, a tender melancholy, such an anguish, that he had great difficulty to restrain his tears.

When they had left the habitations, and were in the open country, in the windings of the deserted road, a still blacker veil spread itself over his thoughts. He had no other object than the mule-driver whom he could regard with confidence, and he belonging to the Cardinal's service must certainly be a worthy man, and besides he had not a cowardly air. Every now and then, they encountered travellers who hastened to see the Cardinal; this was a consolation for Don Abbondio, but alas! only a fugitive one, for he was travelling towards that fearful valley, where they would only meet the subjects of the friend, and

what subjects! He would now have desired more than ever to enter into discourse with the friend, as much to fathom his motives as to keep him in good humour, but seeing him absorbed in thought, this desire left him. He was therefore obliged to talk with himself; and here is a portion of the poor man's conversation during the journey: were we to write down the whole, we should have enough wherewith to make a book.

“Is it not a strange thing that saints as well as rogues should have quicksilver in their veins, and not content with always being in motion themselves must desire to draw into the dance, if they can, all the human race; and that the most active must always come in search of me, who never go in search of any one, and drag me by the hair into their affairs, I who never ask anything more than to be allowed to live? This mad rascal, Don Rodrigo! What does he require to make him the happiest man in the world, if he only had a little more wisdom? He is young, rich, respected, courted—a quiet life is wearisome to him; and he must needs go in search of troubles, both for himself and others. He might lead a life of ease; but no, sirs, he will follow the trade of molesting women—the most foolish, the most rascally, the most insane trade in this world; he might ride to paradise in his carriage, but he chooses to go limping to the devil's house. And this man!” and here he glanced at him, as though he suspected that the Unknown heard his thoughts; “this man, after he has turned the world topsy-turvy by his wickedness, now turns it topsy-turvy by his conversion—if it be real! Meanwhile it is for me to make the experiment,

whether it is so or not!—There are people who, when they are born with this rage within them, must always be making a noise. Is so much then required to play the gentleman all one's life, as I have done? No, sirs; but they must quarter, kill, and play the devil—oh, poor me!—and then there must be a disturbance even when they do penance. Penance, when one really desires it, one can perform at home, quietly, without so much preparation, without causing one's neighbour so much inconvenience.—And his illustrious lordship immediately with open arms receives him, calls him 'dear friend, my dearest friend;' listens to his slightest word, as though he had seen him perform miracles; straightway seizes a resolution, enters into it hand and foot—quickly here! quickly there! is what at home we call precipitation. And without the least earnest-money, places in his hand a poor curate! This is what is called playing odd and even with a poor man! A holy bishop, such as he, should be jealous of his curates as of the apple of his eye. A little patience, a little prudence, a little charity, it seems to me may exist together with holiness. And if this should be only outside show! Who can know all the designs of men, and, I say, of men such as this? Only to think, that it is for me to go with him to his house! There may be some plot concealed under all this; alas, for me! it is better not to think of this. What is all this affair about Lucia? If there should be an understanding with Don Rodrigo? What people there are! But how has she fallen into the clutches of this man? Who knows? It is all a secret with Monsignore; and to me, whom they make trot about in this manner, they say not a

word. I do not trouble myself about other people's affairs; but when one risks one's life, one has some right to know something. If it were really to go and fetch this creature—why, patience! However, he could very well conduct her back himself. And then, if he is thus converted, if he is become a holy father, what need was there for me? O what a chaos! Enough, heaven has willed it; it will here be a great inconvenience; but patience! I shall be very happy also for this poor Lucia; she also will have escaped wonderfully; heaven knows what she has suffered; I pity her, but she is born for my ruin. Ah, if I could only see really into this man's heart, and know what he thinks! Who can know that? See, now he appears St. Antonio in the desert, now Holophernes himself. Oh, unfortunate that I am! unfortunate that I am! Enough; heaven is obliged to aid me, for I have not run into this affair through my own caprice."

And in truth, over the countenance of the Unknown thoughts might be said to pass, like clouds in a tempestuous hour across the sun's disc—a violent light, and a cold gloom, alternating every moment. His soul, still intoxicated by Federigo's gentle words, and as it were enjoying a second youth in its new life, was elated by this idea of mercy, pardon, and love; then, again, it would be depressed by the weight of the terrible past. He hastened with anxiety to discover those deeds of wickedness which might yet be repaired, something which he might break off in the middle, those remedies which were the most expedient and most sure; how he should loosen so many knots, and what he should do with so many accomplices;

—to think of all this was enough to confound him. Even to the present expedition, which was the easiest of all, and which was so near its termination, he applied himself with an impatience, mingled with anguish, thinking that all this time the poor girl was suffering, God knows how much, and that he, the one who yearned to liberate her, was still the one who kept her in suffering. Wherever there happened to be two roads, the mule-driver turned round to inquire which he should take: the Unknown indicated the right one with his hand, and at the same time signed to him to make all speed.

At length they entered the valley. How was it then with Don Abbondio? To be really in this famous valley, regarding which he had so often heard such horrible histories related; to see, in flesh and blood, these famous men, the flower of the Italian bravoës—these men without fear and mercy, and to meet them thus, one, two, three, at every turning of the road. They bowed most submissively certainly before the Signor; but these bronzed visages—these bushy whiskers! these great wicked eyes, which to Don Abbondio seemed to say, “Shall we kill this priest?” so great a terror did they inspire him with, that in a moment of extreme consternation, he said to himself, “Had I married them nothing more could have happened to me.” During all this time they proceeded by a sandy road, along the torrent; there these steep cliffs—gloomy, uninhabited; here this population, which would make any desert seem desirable. Dante was not placed in a worse situation in the middle of Malebolge.

They passed the Malanotte; the bravoës standing

at the entrance saluted the Signor, and stared at his companion and the litter. They did not know what to think; the departure of the Unknown alone that morning was something extraordinary; the return was not less so. Was this a captive he brought with him? But how had he been able to take a captive by himself? And what was this strange litter? and whose livery could this be? They gazed and gazed, but no one moved, for such was the command their master gave with his eye.

They make the ascent, they have reached the summit. The braves, who are on the esplanade and at the portal, retire and leave a free passage; the Unknown again signs that no one shall move; he spurs his mule, and passes on before the litter; signs to the mule-driver and Don Abbondio that they shall follow him; enters a court, passes out of it into a second; rides towards a small door, commands by a sign a bravo to keep back, who runs forward to hold his stirrup, and says to him, "stay thou there, and allow no one to approach." He now dismounts, fastens the mule in haste to an iron bar, goes towards the litter, approaches the woman who has opened the curtains, and says, in a low voice, "console her quickly; make her quickly understand that she is free, in the hands of friends. God will recompense you." He signs to the mule-driver to open the litter; then nears Don Abbondio, and with a more serene appearance than Don Abbondio had yet observed, or ever had believed he could assume, and with joy at seeing his good work, at length nearly brought to its completion, painted upon his countenance, he says to Don Abbondio, also in an under-tone, "Signor Curato,

I do not ask your excuse for the inconvenience you have suffered on my account; you have done this for One who pays well, and for this your poor child." Having thus spoken, he with one hand seizes the bridle, with the other the stirrup, and assists Don Abbondio to descend.

This countenance, these words, this action, had given him life. He heaved a sigh, which he had suppressed for the last hour; and, bowing towards the Unknown, replied in a very low voice, "Does it appear to you so? But, but, but, but ——!" and he slid as well as he could from his mule. The Unknown then fastened the second mule, told the driver to await them there, took from his pocket a key, unlocked the door, entered, made the curate and the women enter also, preceded them to the small staircase, and all three ascended in silence.

CHAPTER XXIV.

LUCIA had been awake but a short time, and a portion of this interval she had striven to arouse herself thoroughly, and endeavoured to separate the troubled visions of her sleep from the memories and images of that reality which bore only too much resemblance to the terrible visions of a delirious patient. The old woman had speedily approached her, and in a humble voice, which she had with difficulty assumed, said to her, "Ah! have you slept? you could have slept in bed? I told you so many times last night." And having received no reply, she continued, always in an angry tone of supplication; "only eat a little; be wise. Ah, how foolish you are! You must require food."

"No, no, I wish to go; I wish to go to my mother. The master has promised me this; he said, to-morrow morning. Where is the master?"

"He is gone out; but he told me he should return quickly, and that he would do all you desired."

"Has he said so—has he said so? Well, I wish to go to my mother, immediately, immediately."

There was heard a step in the next room, then a knock. The old woman ran to the door, and demanded, "who is there?"

"Open," replied in a low tone the well-known voice. The old woman drew the bolt; the Unknown

half opening the two halves of the folding-door formed a sort of loophole; he ordered the old woman to come forth, and immediately made Don Abbondio enter with the good woman; he then again closed the door, remained on the outside, and sent the old woman into a distant part of the castle, whither he had already despatched the other woman who had kept guard.

All this movement, this moment of expectation, the first appearance of fresh persons, caused Lucia an increase of agitation; for, although her present situation was insupportable to her, all change seemed, nevertheless, a cause of suspicion and new terror. She looks, she sees a priest, a woman—she is somewhat reassured, she looks more attentively—is it, or is it not he? She recognises Don Abbondio, and remains with her eyes fixed upon him, like one enchanted. The woman approaches her, bends over her, looks at her compassionately, and taking her hands, as if to caress and raise her at the same time, says to her, “O my poor girl, come, come with us!”

“Who are you?” Lucia demanded; but without awaiting the reply, she again turned towards Don Abbondio, who was standing two paces distant from her with a countenance also full of compassion; she riveted her eyes again upon him, and exclaimed, “it is he! it is he! the Signor Curato. Where are we? Oh, unfortunate that I am, I am out of my senses!”

“No, no,” replied Don Abbondio, “it is I, in reality, take courage. Do you see, we are here to fetch you away! I am really your Curate, come here on purpose, and on horseback ——”

Lucia, as though all at once she had recovered her strength, rose suddenly to her feet, and fixing again

her gaze upon these two countenances, said, "it is then the Madonna who has sent you."

"I believe it is," said the good woman.

"But can we go away, can we go away really?" continued Lucia, lowering her voice, and with a timid and suspicious look. "And all these people ——?" continued she, her lips contracted, and trembling with fear and horror; "and this Signor ——! this man ——! He has already promised me ——"

"He is also here in person, come on purpose with us," said Don Abbondio; "it is he who waits outside. Let us go immediately; do not let us make such a man as he is wait."

At this moment, the one of whom they spoke pushed open the door and shewed himself. Lucia, who but a short time before had desired this, and who having no other hope in the world, had only desired to see him; now, after having seen friendly faces and heard friendly voices, could not repress a sudden terror; she shuddered, held her breath, and pressing close to the good woman, concealed her face in her bosom. At the sight of this countenance, upon which the evening before he had been unable to fix his gaze, at the sight of this poor young creature, now become still more pale, worn, and distressed through her prolonged suffering and fast, the Unknown had paused almost upon the threshold; then, observing this action of terror, he cast down his eyes, stood yet a moment immoveable and silent, and then replying to nothing that the poor girl had exclaimed, said, "it is true; pardon me!"

"He is come to liberate you; he is no longer what he was; he is become kind. Do you hear that he

asks your pardon?" whispered the good woman in Lucia's ear.

"What more can be said? Come, look up; do not play the child, now that we can depart immediately," said Don Abbondio.

Lucia raised her eyes, looked at the Unknown, and seeing his bowed head—his humbled and confused expression of countenance, there arose within her a confused sentiment of consolation, of gratitude and of pity, and she said, "Oh, my lord! God will reward you for your mercy."

"And you a hundred times for the comfort which your words cause me."

Saying this, he turned, walked towards the door, and went out first; Lucia, quite revived, with the woman who offered her her arm, followed next; Don Abbondio brought up the rear; they descended the staircase and reached the door which led into the little court-yard. The Unknown opened it, went towards the litter, opened its small door, and with a gentleness, almost a timidity (two new traits in his behaviour), supporting Lucia's arm, assisted first her and then the good woman to enter. He next unfastened Don Abbondio's mule, and aided him also to mount.

"O what courtesy!" said our Curate, and mounted much more quickly than he had done the first time. The train moved off as soon as the Unknown had himself mounted. His brow had again become calm, his glance had again assumed its customary expression of authority. The braves he met remarked in his countenance the signs of deep thought, of some extraordinary pre-occupation; but they did not understand, they could not understand more than this. As yet

nothing was known of the great change which had taken place in this man, and certainly they could never have conjectured it.

The good woman immediately drew the curtains of the litter, and then, taking affectionately Lucia's hands, she endeavoured to console her with words of compassion, congratulations, and tenderness. Then, observing how, beside the fatigue occasioned by so much past suffering, the confusion and obscurity of the present events prevented the poor girl from fully enjoying the delight of her liberation, she said every thing which she thought most likely to disentangle her thoughts, so to say, and direct them into the right course. She named to her the village whither they were going.

"Yes," said Lucia, who knew that this village was but a short distance from her own. "Ah, most Holy Madonna, I thank thee! My mother, my mother!"

"We will send for her immediately," said the good woman, who did not know that this had already been done.

"Yes, yes; may God reward you for it — And you—who are you? How did you come —?"

"Our Curate sent me," returned the good woman; "for this Signor, whose heart God has touched—blessed be He!—came to our village to speak to the Signor Cardinal Archbishop,—who is with us on a visit, the holy man,—and he has repented of his sins, and desired to alter his life; and he, among other things, told the Cardinal that he had carried off an innocent young girl—that was yourself—at the instigation of another godless wretch, whose name the Curate did not tell me."

Lucia raised her eyes towards heaven.

“You, perhaps, know it,” continued the good dame; “therefore, the Signor Cardinal thinking that, as a young girl was concerned, she should have a woman to accompany her, he told the Curate to seek out one; and the Curate, through his goodness, came to me —”

“Oh, the Lord recompense you for this act of charity!”

“And what do you think, my good girl? The Signor Curato told me, that I should inspire you with courage, endeavour to soothe you as soon as possible, and make you understand how miraculously the Lord has saved you —”

“Ah, yes! truly miraculously, through the intercession of the Madonna.”

“And that therefore you should be of good courage, pardon him who has done you evil, be happy that God has shewn him mercy, and even pray for him, that thus, not only you may have your reward, but that you also may feel your heart enlarged.”

Lucia replied by a look which said, “yes,” as clearly as words could have done, and contained a sweetness which no words could have expressed.

“Excellent girl!” returned the woman; “and your Curate being also in our village (where there is an immense number of clergymen from all the neighbourhood—enough to celebrate four high masses at once), the Signor Cardinal thought of sending him also to accompany me; but he has been of but little assistance. I had already heard that he was a useless sort of man; but upon this occasion I have seen with my own eyes that he is more embarrassed than a chicken in a heap of tow.”

“And who ——” demanded Lucia, “who is it that has become good —— who is it?”

“How! do you not know?” said the good woman, and here she mentioned his name.

“O what a mercy!” exclaimed Lucia; “this name, how often had she heard it repeated with horror, in more than one history, in which it always figured like the name of some ogre in a fairy-tale! And now, at the thought of having been in his terrible power, in his pitiless guardianship; at the thought of such a horrible misfortune, and of such an unforeseen deliverance, and considering whose was this countenance which she had seen at first angry, then moved with compassion, then humbled, she remained as though enraptured, exclaiming from time to time, “O what a great mercy!”

“It is a great mercy, indeed!” said the good woman; “it will be a great relief to many people far and near. To think how many people he has kept in a state of alarm; and now, as our Curate told me —— and then, only to look him in the face, one should say he was become a saint! And then the fruits of his conversion are so speedily seen.”

To say that this good dame did not feel a deal of curiosity to know somewhat more distinctly the particulars of the great adventure in which she found herself an actor, would not be the truth. But we must say it to her honour, that she, restrained by a respectful compassion for Lucia, and feeling in a certain degree the gravity and dignity of the trust which had been confided to her, did not even think of asking either an indiscreet or idle question; all her words, during the journey, were words of comfort and interest to the poor girl.

"Heaven only knows how long it is since you tasted food!"

"I no longer remember —— not for some time."

"Poor girl! You will have need of something to restore you."

"Yes," replied Lucia in a weak voice.

"At home, thank God, we shall soon find something. Take courage, for now we are but a short way off."

Lucia then sank languidly back in the litter, as though exhausted, and the good woman left her to repose.

For Don Abbondio, this return was certainly not as full of agony as the ride towards the castle had been but a short time before; yet, nevertheless, it was not a journey of pleasure. When his great terror had ceased, he at first felt himself relieved of a great burthen; but very soon, however, there sprung up in his heart a hundred other vexations, much in the same manner as when a large tree has been removed the earth remains unoccupied for some time, but soon again is covered with herbage. He was become more alive to other things, and as much in the present as in thoughts of the future he found subjects wherewith to torment himself. He experienced now, more than in going, the discomforts of this mode of travelling, to which he was not much accustomed; and this more especially in the commencement, during his descent from the castle into the valley. The driver, stimulated by signs from the Unknown, made his beasts proceed at a good pace; the ridden mules followed one after the other at an equally quick trot; so that, at certain steep places in the road, poor Don Abbondio, as though a lever had been thrust under

him from behind, fell forward, and in order to keep his seat was forced to support himself by holding on the saddle-bow; he did not dare to pray them to proceed more slowly, and yet he desired for another reason to get out of the country as quickly as possible. Besides this, wherever the road ran along a height or a ridge, the mule, following the custom of his race, seemed as though he designedly kept himself always on the outside, and placed his feet precisely on the edge; and Don Abbondio saw below him, almost perpendicular, a leap, or as it seemed to him a precipice — “Thou also,” he internally apostrophised his beast, “thou also then hast this cursed desire of seeking dangerous places when the road is broad enough!” — and he pulled the bridle the contrary way, but in vain; and thus, as usual, although consumed with rage and fear, he allowed himself to be conducted according to the will of others. The bravoës no longer caused him terror, now that he knew more certainly the thoughts of their master. “But —” he reflected, “if the news of this grand conversion should spread itself through this part of the country whilst we are still here, who knows how these people will receive it? Who knows what may arise? How, if they should imagine that I have been here acting the missionary! Unfortunate that I am! they will martyr me!” The frown of the Unknown no longer caused him disquiet. “To keep these creatures in obedience,” thought he, “nothing less than this frown is necessary, that I understand; but why must I find myself in the midst of these people?”

They soon arrived at the extremity of the descent, and at length issued out of the valley. The brow of

the Unknown became even serener, Don Abbondio also assumed a more natural air; he drew forth his head from between his shoulders, stretched his legs and arms, seated himself somewhat more upright, which gave him quite another appearance, drew longer breaths, and, with a mind more at ease began to consider other distant dangers. "What will this brutish Don Rodrigo say? To remain thus disconcerted, vexed, and jeered, judge whether he will find it bitter or not! Now it is that he will play the devil indeed! It remains to be seen whether he will quarrel with me, for having been concerned in this fine affair. If he had the heart in the beginning to send me those two demons to play me such a trick on the high road, what will he do now? He dare not attempt anything with his illustrious lordship, he is rather too big a morsel for him; he will be forced to champ his bit; meanwhile he will have the venom in his body, and will wish to discharge it upon some one. How do these sort of affairs end? His illustrious lordship will think, as is reasonable, of placing Lucia in safety; this other poor wretch is beyond musket-shot; and he has already met with his deserts. Thus then am I become the victim. It would be barbarous after so many inconveniences, after so much agitation, without having gained any of the merit, that I should bear all the punishment. What will his illustrious lordship now do to defend me, after having dragged me into the business? Will he be my security that this cursed man will not play me a worse action than he did at first? And then he has so many affairs in his head—he lends a hand to so many affairs! How can he pay attention to them all? Those who do good,

do it by wholesale: when they have experienced this satisfaction, they have had sufficient, they will not trouble themselves by following out all the consequences. But those who have pleasure in doing evil, set themselves to work more diligently; they follow it up to the very end, and never allow themselves any repose, for they have this cancer which devours them. I should say that I came here by the express commands of the Cardinal, and not from my own free will. That would seem as though I were on the side of iniquity. Oh, holy heaven! on the side of iniquity — I! for the pleasures which it affords me. Enough; the best thing will be to relate the whole affair as it is to Perpetua, and then let Perpetua circulate it. Provided only the whim does not seize my lord to do something public, to get up some useless scene, and drag me into it. However, at all events, as soon as we have arrived, if he is come out of church, I will go and take my leave of him in all haste, and even should he not be yet out of church, I will leave my excuses, and then will set off straight home. Lucia is well supported; she will have no longer need of me; and after so much inconvenience, I also may expect to go and take a little repose. And then — if my lord should be seized with the curiosity to know all the history, and if I should have to give an account of the whole affair regarding the marriage? Then, indeed, nothing else would be wanting! And if he should come to pay a visit to my parish? — Oh! let happen what will, I will not go and torment myself before the time comes—I have troubles enough; for the present I will go and shut myself up at home. As long as my lord remains in these parts, Don

Rodrigo will not have the face to commit his follies. And then —— and then? Ah! I see that my last years will be passed in trouble!”

The train arrived before Divine service was over; it passed through the midst of the same crowd, which was not less full of emotion than the first time, and then the train separated. The Unknown and Don Abbondio turned towards a small square in which stood the curate's house; the litter proceeded towards the good woman's home.

Don Abbondio did what he had thought of; scarcely had he dismounted, than he paid the Unknown the most overstrained compliments, and besought him to make his excuses to the Cardinal, and say that he was obliged to return immediately to his parish on account of the most urgent affairs. He then went in search of what he called his horse, that is to say his stick, which he had left in a corner of the hall, and then proceeded on his way. The Unknown awaited the Cardinal's return from church.

The good dame made Lucia seat herself in the best place in her kitchen, busying herself to prepare something which should restore her strength, and with a certain cordial rudeness refusing to listen to the excuses and thanks which Lucia each time renewed.

She hastened to lay dry wood under a small pot which she had placed on the fire, and in which swam a good capon; she made the broth boil, and filling with it a porringer, into which she had already cut pieces of bread, she was at length able to present Lucia with some of her broth. And seeing the poor girl gather strength with each spoonful, she congratulated herself aloud that this happened on a day, when, to use her own phrase, the cat had not eaten

up all in the cupboard. "Every one endeavours to-day to cook something," added she, "all, except the very poor, who have to work hard to get even vetch-bread and millet-polenta; however, to-day, they all hope to receive something from so charitable a gentleman. We, thank heaven! we are not in this case; with my husband's trade, and a little estate which we have, we manage to live. Therefore eat without thinking about any such thing. Immediately the capon will be ready, and then you will be able to refresh yourself with something better." And saying this, she returned to prepare the dinner and lay the cloth.

Lucia, having somewhat recovered her strength, and her mind becoming ever more calm, commenced arranging her toilet, from an instinctive feeling of neatness and propriety; she rearranged and tightened her loosened braids of hair, straightened the handkerchief upon her bosom and round her throat, and whilst doing this her fingers encountered the rosary which she had placed there the night before. Her glance fell upon it, and suddenly there arose a tumult within her; the memory of the vow, suppressed until then, and unremembered among so many present emotions, presented itself suddenly, clearly, and distinctly to her mind. Then were all the newly-revived powers of her soul at once again overpowered; and had not her soul been always prepared, by a life of innocence, resignation, and faith, the consternation which she experienced in that moment would have been desperation. After a tumult of undefined thoughts, the first words which occurred to her mind were, "Oh, unfortunate that I am! What have I done!"

But scarcely had she thought this, before she was seized with terror. All the circumstances regarding the vow returned to her recollection—her intolerable anguish, her being destitute of every hope of succour, the fervour of her prayers, the intensity of feeling with which the vow had been made. And now, after having obtained the request, to repent of the promise seemed indeed a piece of sacrilegious ingratitude, perfidy towards God and the Madonna; it appeared to her, that infidelity such as this would draw upon her new and more terrible misfortunes, enduring which she could no longer place hope even in prayer, and she hastened to abjure this momentary repentance. She removed with devotion the rosary from her neck, and holding it in her trembling hand, she confirmed, renewed the vow, beseeching at the same time with a deep fervour that heaven would grant her strength to accomplish it, and preserve her from those thoughts and circumstances which, even did they not shake her resolution, would agitate her dreadfully. The separation from Renzo, without any probability of his return—this separation, which until then had been so bitter, appeared to her now ordained by Providence; who had designed these two events to work together unto one end; and she studied to discover in one the reason why she should be satisfied with the other. And then, after this thought, she imagined to herself that this same Providence, in order to complete the work, would know how to discover the means by which Renzo would console himself, and no longer think — But an idea such as this entirely confounded the mind which had sought for it. Poor Lucia, feeling that her heart was ready to repent, again returned to prayer,

to confirmation of her vow, to combat, and she arose, if we may here be allowed the simile, like a conqueror, who, wounded and exhausted, leaves his enemy vanquished, but not slain.

Suddenly was heard a sound of footsteps, and the exclamations of joyous voices. It was the family who returned from church. Two very young children, with an elder child, sprang into the room; they paused a moment to gaze with curiosity at Lucia, then ran to their mother, and grouped themselves around her; one asked the name of the unknown guest, and all about her; another wished to recount the wonders they had seen: the good woman replied to both one and the other with a "hush! hush!" Then there entered, with a more tranquil step, but with a cordial eagerness depicted on his countenance, the master of the house. He was, if we have not already informed our readers, the tailor of the village and the neighbouring country; a man who knew how to read, and who had read more than once the "Legends of the Saints," the "Unfortunate Guerrin," and the "*Real di Francia*," and who passed in those parts for a man of talents and knowledge; praises, however, which he modestly refused, only saying that he had mistaken his vocation, and that had he studied instead of many others, why — With this, he was the best tempered man in the world. Happening to be present when his wife was requested by the Curate to undertake this charitable journey, he not only gave his approbation, but would have encouraged her to undertake it, had this been necessary. And now, that the Divine service, the pomp, the concourse, and above all the Cardinal's sermon, had, as one says, exalted all his

good sentiments, he returned home with an anxious expectation and desire to know how the thing had succeeded, and to learn whether the poor innocent girl were saved.

“Only look,” said the good woman to him as he entered, pointing to Lucia, who colouring, rose and began to stammer forth some excuses. But he, approaching, interrupted her with great demonstration of joy, and exclaimed, “Welcome! welcome! You are the blessing of heaven in this house. How happy I am to see you here! I was sure that you would arrive safely, for I have never known the Lord commence a miracle without completing it well; but really I am happy to see you here! Poor girl! However, it is a great thing to have been the object of a miracle!”

Do not, however, let my readers imagine that he alone, having read the Legends, considered this event in the light of a miracle; throughout the village and the environs it was spoken of in no other terms, even as long as the memory of it existed. And to say the truth, with the various additions which were made, no other name could properly be applied.

Then slowly approaching his wife, who unfastened the pot from the chain to which it was suspended over the fire, he said in a low voice, “has every thing gone on well?”

“Very well; I will relate all to thee in a little while.”

“Yes, yes; when it is agreeable.”

The dinner being placed immediately on the table, the mistress went towards Lucia, led her to the table, made her seat herself, cut off a wing of the capon

and placed it before her; she and her husband then seated themselves, both encouraging their wearied and modest guest to eat. The tailor began with his mouthful, to discourse with great emphasis, in the midst of the children's interruptions, for they were eating at the same table, and in truth had seen too many extraordinary things to play the part of listeners long. He described the solemn ceremonies, then digressed to speak of the miraculous conversion; but that which had made the most impression upon him, and to which he most often referred, was the Cardinal's sermon.

"And to see him before the altar," said he, "a Signor of his rank, just as though he were a curate —"

"And that golden thing he had on his head —" said one of the little children.

"Be quiet! To think, I say, that a Signor of his rank, a man so learned, who, according to what people say, has read all the books that exist, a thing which never has happened before to any one, not even in Milan; to think that he knows how to say all these beautiful things in such a manner that everybody understands —"

"I also have understood," said another of the little gossips.

"Be silent! What canst thou have understood?"

"I understood that he explained the Scriptures instead of the Signor Curato."

"Be silent. I do not alone say those who know something; but even the most ignorant, the most stupid, were able to follow the thread of his discourse. Ask them now whether they would be able to repeat

the words he spoke; oh no! they would not be able to repeat one; but they have understood the sentiment. And without ever naming the Signor, how every one felt that he spoke of him! And then, as to understanding, it would have been enough only to observe how many people had tears in their eyes. And then, all the people weeping ——”

“It is true,” escaped from one of the children; “but why did they all cry in this manner, like children?”

“Be quiet. And there are, indeed, many hard hearts in this place. He has shewn us that, although there may be a dearth, we must return thanks to the Lord, and be contented; we must do what we can; be industrious, assist each other, and then be contented. For misfortune does not consist in suffering and being poor, misfortune is doing evil. And these are not merely fine words, for one knows that he also lives like a poor man, and takes the bread from his own lip to give to the hungry, when he might lead an easier life than any one. Ah, indeed, there is satisfaction in hearing such a man discourse; he is not like many men who say, ‘Do as I tell you, but not as I act.’ Then he has shewn that even those who are not signori, if they have more than is absolutely necessary, are obliged to bestow some of their overabundance to those who suffer.”

Here he interrupted the discourse himself, as though he were surprised by a thought. He paused a moment, then put some of the various meats together on a dish, added a small loaf, placed the dish in a napkin, and then taking it by the four corners, gave it to one of the children, saying, “Here, take

this." He placed in the other hand a bottle of wine, adding, "Go to the widow Maria, leave her these things, and tell her that this is something for her to make merry over, with her children. But do this with a good grace; don't seem as though thou wert doing an act of charity; say nothing if thou shouldst meet any one; and take care not to break anything."

Lucia's eyes were filled with tears, and she felt in her heart a consoling tenderness; for the words of this good man, from the first, had calmed her more than any sermon directly addressed to herself could have done. Her soul, attracted by these descriptions of religious pomp, of these emotions of pity and astonishment, was seized with the same enthusiasm as the narrator, and separated itself from all painful thoughts; ever returning again to their contemplation the soul found itself strengthened. The very idea of this great sacrifice had not certainly lost its bitterness, but still combined with this there was a kind of austere and solemn joy.

Shortly after, the village curate entered, and said that he had been sent by the Cardinal, to inquire after Lucia, to inform her that his lordship desired to see her during the course of that day, and also to thank, in his name, the good tailor and his wife. Both these excellent people and Lucia, filled with emotion and confusion, could not find words in which to reply to such messages from such a personage.

"And your mother is not yet arrived?" said the Curate to Lucia.

"My mother!" she exclaimed. The Curate then informing her, how by the Cardinal's command she had been sent for, poor Lucia put her apron to her

eyes, and burst into a fit of weeping, which lasted some time after the Curate had taken his departure. When the tumultuous emotions which had risen within her at this announcement had subsided and given place to calmer thoughts, the poor girl recollected that this consolation, now so near, the seeing again of her mother—a consolation so unexpected but a few hours before—had been expressly implored by her in those hours of terror, and had been one condition of the vow. “Let me return safely to my mother,” she had said, and now these words distinctly recurred to her remembrance. She confirmed herself more than ever in her resolve to maintain her promise, and reproached herself again, and more bitterly than ever, for the “unfortunate that I am!” which had escaped her in the first moment of her agitation.

In fact, Agnese, whilst they were speaking of her, was but a short way off. One can readily imagine how anxious the poor woman must have been after receiving this unexpected invitation; and this news, necessarily imperfect and confused regarding a danger which might certainly be said to be passed, but which was terrible, nevertheless; news of a frightful event, which the messenger neither knew how to circumstantiate nor explain; and then she had nothing from which to gain an explanation. After thrusting her hands through her hair, after many exclamations of “O Lord! O Madonna!” after various questionings of the messenger, to which he had not known what to answer, she had with great haste mounted the cart, continuing on the way to exclaim and interrogate unceasingly. But at a certain point they had met

Don Abbondio, who came along very slowly, at each step which he took setting down before him his stick. After a mutual "Ah!" he paused, and she ordered the cart to stop, and dismounted, and they both retired into a chestnut wood on one side of the road. Don Abbondio informed her of what he knew and had seen. The affair was not clear; but Agnese was at least assured that Lucia was in a place of safety, and she breathed again.

After this, Don Abbondio would have liked to commence another conversation, and give her a long instruction regarding the manner in which she should conduct herself towards the Archbishop, should he, as was probable, desire to speak with her and with her daughter; and above all, to tell her, that it was not at all the thing to speak of the marriage — But Agnese, perceiving that the good man only spoke for his own interest, had left him, without promising anything, even without having proposed anything, for, said she, they had something quite different to think about. And she was again on her way.

At length, the cart arrived, and stopped before the tailor's house. Lucia rose precipitately; Agnese descends, and flies into the house; they are in each other's arms. The tailor's wife was the only one present at this meeting, she tranquillized them, and rejoiced with them, and then, always discreet, she left them alone, saying that she went to prepare a bed, which she was able to do without incommoding themselves; but that, under any circumstances, she as well as her husband should rather have slept on the floor than have allowed them to go and seek lodging elsewhere.

The first paroxysm of embraces and sobs being past, Agnese desired to know the adventures of Lucia, and she affectionately prepared to recount them. But, as the reader knows, this was a history which no one person knew entirely; and even for Lucia there were passages obscure, nay, perfectly inexplicable. And above all there was the fatal coincidence of the terrible carriage being in the road, precisely when Lucia was passing that way by an extraordinary accident. Regarding this, mother and daughter formed a hundred conjectures, without ever divining the true cause, or even approaching it.

As to the principal author of the plot, neither one nor the other could doubt but it must be Don Rodrigo.

“A black soul! firebrand of hell!” exclaimed Agnese; “but his hour will come. The Lord will reward him according to his merit; and even he then will experience ——”

“No, no, mother, no!” interrupted Lucia; “do not desire him to suffer; do not desire suffering for any one! If you did but know what it is to suffer—If you had but experienced —— No, no! rather pray to God and the Madonna for him; pray that God may touch his heart, as he has touched the heart of this other poor Signor, who was worse than he, and who now is a saint.”

The terror which Lucia experienced in recalling her recent and cruel sufferings, caused her more than once to pause in the middle of her relation; more than once she said that she had not courage enough to continue, and, after many tears, she proceeded with difficulty. But a different sentiment made her hesitate when she reached a certain part of her nar-

rative—when she arrived at the vow. Fear, that her mother should accuse her of imprudence and inconsiderate haste, and that she should, as in the affair of the marriage, bring into the field some of her fine rules of conscience, and oblige her to consider them good; or that the poor woman should relate the affair in confidence, if only to gain some light upon the subject, and some advice, and that thus it should become public—a thing, which only to think of, made the colour mount into her cheeks; also there was a certain shame at mentioning it even to her mother, and an inexplicable repugnance at touching upon the subject; all these reasons together caused her to conceal this important circumstance, proposing to herself to confide it first of all to the Father Cristoforo. But how did she feel, when, asking after him, she heard in reply that he was no more at Pescarenico, but had been despatched into a country, a long, long way off!

“And Renzo?” said Agnese.

“He is in safety, is he not?” said Lucia anxiously.

“This is certain, for every one says so; it is held for sure that he has concealed himself in the Bergamascan territory, but the exact place no one is able to say; and up to the present time he has sent no intelligence of himself. It must be that he has not yet found the means.”

“Ah, if he is in safety the Lord be praised!” said Lucia, and sought to change the discourse, when all at once it was interrupted by an unexpected event, the arrival of the Cardinal Archbishop.

The latter having returned from church, where we left him, heard from the Unknown, that Lucia had

arrived safe and sound; he then, accompanied by the Unknown, placed himself at table, causing his guest to sit on his right hand in the midst of a circle of priests, who could not satisfy themselves with glancing at this countenance—so softened, yet without weakness; so humbled, yet without loss of dignity; and could not avoid drawing a comparison between this countenance and the idea which for so long they had formed of this personage.

The dinner over, the two again retired together. After a conversation which lasted much longer than the first, the Unknown had set forth for his castle, mounted upon the same mule as in the morning; and then the Cardinal, calling the Curate, told him he desired to be conducted to the house where Lucia was sheltered.

“O my lord,” the Curate had replied, “do not trouble yourself, I will send immediately, and inform them that the young woman, her mother, if she is arrived, and the host and hostess, shall come here, if my lord pleases; all those, in one word, whom his lordship shall desire to see.”

“I desire to go and find them myself,” Federigo replied.

“Your lordship need not trouble yourself, I will send for them, it is an affair of a moment;” again insisted this Curate Marplot (otherwise a very good man), not understanding that the Cardinal wished by this visit, to render honour at once to misfortune, to innocence, to hospitality, and to his own ministry. But the Superior having again expressed the same desire, the inferior bowed, and moved away.

When these two personages were perceived in the

street, all the people who were there ran towards them, and in a few moments the inhabitants of the village hastened from all sides, those who could crowd-
ing round them, others following behind. The Curate cried, "keep back, back, retire!" But Federigo said, "permit them," and proceeded, now raising his hands to bless the people, now lowering them to caress the children who got between his feet. In this manner they reached the house, entered it, and the crowd remained outside. But in the midst of this crowd there happened to be the tailor, who had gone along with the others, his eyes riveted, his mouth open, not knowing whither they were going. But when he saw the unexpected whither, he extricated himself,—you can imagine in what a bustle, crying, again and again, "clear the way for those who enter," and then entered the house also.

Agnese and Lucia heard an increasing noise in the street, and whilst they were thinking what this might be, they saw the door open and the Cardinal and Curate appear.

"Is this the young girl?" demanded the first-named personage of his companion, and receiving a sign of affirmation, he turned towards Lucia, who had remained standing with her mother, both of them immoveable and mute from surprise and shame. But the tone of his voice, the aspect, the bearing, and above all the words of Federigo, soon encouraged them. "Poor girl," he commenced; "God has permitted you to be exposed to a great trial, but He has shewn that He has not removed His eyes from you, that He has not forgotten you. He has placed you in safety, and has employed you in a great

work, in performing a great deed of mercy towards one man, and, at the same time, in relieving many others."

Here the mistress of the house entered the room. She, hearing the noise, had also gone to the window, and seeing who entered her house, had descended the stairs in haste, after having arranged her dress as well as she could; almost at the same moment the tailor also entered at the other door. Perceiving that the Cardinal was engaged in conversation, they went together into a corner, where they remained with great respect. The Cardinal having courteously saluted them, continued to speak with the women, mingling with his consolations some questions, to see whether by their replies he could discover any occasion to do good to the one who had suffered so much.

"All priests should be like your lordship, so that they might take the side of the poor a little, and not try to get them into trouble, in order merely to draw themselves out," said Agnese, encouraged by the familiar and friendly behaviour of Federigo, and angered by the thought that the Signor Don Abbon-dio, after having always sacrificed others, intended even to prevent their breathing a complaint to one who was above him, when, by a very rare accident, an occasion had presented itself.

"Only say all that you think," said the Cardinal; "speak freely."

"I would only say that, if our Signor Curato had done his duty, the thing would not have gone thus far."

But the Cardinal again pressing her to explain herself more clearly, she began to find herself embar-

passed in relating a history in which she herself had played a part she cared little to make known, especially to such a personage. She discovered, however, the means of arranging all; she told the concerted marriage—of the refusal of Don Abbondio; she did not leave out the excuse about the Superiors which he had brought into the field [ah, Agnese!]; she then passed on to the attempt made by Don Rodrigo, and told how they having been informed of it had been able to escape. “Yes,” continued she, “we escaped only to stumble into fresh difficulties. If the Signor Curato had only told us the thing frankly, and had married the poor young folks, we should have gone away all together, secretly, far away, to some place where no one would have known where we were, no, not even the air. In this manner time was lost; and there has happened what has happened.”

“The Signor Curato shall answer to me for this deed,” said the Cardinal.

“No, sir; no, sir,” said Agnese immediately; “I have not spoken for this; do not scold him, for what has been has been; it would be of no use; he, a man of this kind, were the thing to occur again, he would do just the same.”

But Lucia, not satisfied with this manner of relating the history, added, “We also have done wrong; one can see that it was not the will of the Lord that the thing should succeed.”

“What evil have you done, poor girl?” said Federigo.

Lucia, spite of the various glances her mother secretly gave her, recounted the story of the attempt made in Don Abbondio’s house; and concluded by

saying, "We have done evil, and God has chastised us."

"Receive from His hand the sufferings you have endured, and be of good cheer," said Federigo; "for, who will have reason to rejoice and hope, if it is not he who has suffered and thought of accusing himself?"

He then asked where the affianced husband was, and hearing from Agnese (Lucia remained silent, with her head and her eyes cast down), that he had escaped from his country, he expressed astonishment and displeasure, and desired to know the wherefore.

Agnese related as well as she could all the little she knew of Renzo's history.

"I have heard speak of this youth," said the Cardinal; "but how could a man who is involved in affairs of this kind be engaged to such a girl as this?"

"He was an excellent young man," said Lucia, blushing, but with a firm voice.

"He was a quiet youth, almost too quiet," added Agnese, "and this you may ask of any one; of the Curate even. Who knows what intrigues they have planned yonder—what cabals? Little is required to make the poor appear rogues."

"That is only too true," said the Cardinal; "I will inquire after him, without doubt;" and he made them tell him the name and surname of the young man, and noted them down in a little memorandum-book. He then added that he intended in a few days to visit their village; that then Lucia would be able to proceed there without fear, and that, in the meantime, he would consider where he could provide a place for her, where she could be secure, until every thing should be arranged for the best.

He then turned to the master and mistress of the house, who immediately came forward. He renewed the thanks which he had before sent by the Curate, and asked whether they should be willing to shelter for a few days longer, these guests whom God had sent them.

“Oh, yes, my lord!” replied the woman, with a voice and manner which expressed much more than this short reply did, stifled as her words were by her confusion. But the husband, animated by the presence of such a personage, and by the desire of doing himself honour upon an occasion of so much importance, anxiously studied some beautiful reply. He wrinkled his forehead, rolled his eyes, and pressed his lips, sought, strained, and felt within him a confusion of mutilated ideas and half words—but time pressed; the Cardinal seemed already to have interpreted the silence; the poor man opened his lips, and said, “*imagine!*” Nothing else would come. A circumstance which not only astonished him at the moment, but always with its troublesome memory spoiled the pleasure of this great honour conferred upon him. And how many times, turning this over in his thoughts, and placing himself again in imagination in the same circumstances, there would come into his mind, as though to spite him, words which all of them would have been so much better than this foolish “*imagine!*” But, as an old proverb says, the head is full enough of thought when it is too late to use it.

The Cardinal took his leave, saying, “the blessing of the Lord be upon this house.”

He then, in the evening, asked the Curate how it

would be proper to recompense the tailor, who could not be rich, for this expensive hospitality, more especially in these times. The Curate replied that, certainly, neither the gains of his trade nor the profit arising from certain little fields which the good tailor possessed of his own, would have been sufficient in the present year to place him in a situation to be liberal towards others; but that, having saved something in past years, and that, being one of the richest men in the neighbourhood, he could afford to be at some little expense without inconveniencing himself, that he would do this certainly with pleasure; and thus, that there would be no possibility of making him accept any recompense.

“He may have probably,” said the Cardinal, “accounts against people who cannot pay.”

“You can imagine, my illustrious Signor, whether this is the case. These poor people pay with the profit they gain by the harvest; the past year there was no profit; this year, all have remained losers.”

“Well,” said Federigo, “I will take upon myself all these debts; and you will do me the favour to get from him the note of these agreements, and you will settle them.”

“It will be a considerable sum.”

“All the better; there will perhaps be also only too many who will have no bills, because they can find no credit.”

“Ah, only too many! One does as well as one can; but how to satisfy all in times such as these!”

“Let him clothe them all at my expense, and pay him well. Truly, in this year, it appears to me robbery giving money for anything except bread; but this is a peculiar case.”

We will not, however, close the history of this day without briefly recounting the manner in which the Unknown terminated it.

This time, the news of his conversion had preceded him in the valley; there it had speedily spread itself, and had excited everywhere an amazement, an anxiety, an anger, a murmur. To the first bravoos or servitors, they were the same, he encountered, he signed that they should follow him; and this he did to all he met. All followed him, with an unusual suspense, but with their customary obedience; thus, with an ever-increasing train, he arrived at the castle. He signed to those who stood at the portal, that they should follow after him with the others; he entered the first court; rode towards the middle, and there, being still mounted on his mule, he sent forth his shout of thunder; this was the customary signal for all those who heard it immediately to hasten to the spot. In one moment, those who had been dispersed through the castle came forth at this shout, and joined themselves to the rest of the troop; all gazed at their master.

"Go, and await me in the great hall," said he to them, and from the back of his mule he saw them depart. He then descended, conducted the animal himself to the stable, and hastened where he was expected. At his appearance, a great whispering which had been going on immediately ceased; they all crowded together in one part of the hall, leaving for him a wide space: there might have been about thirty bravoos.

The Unknown raised his hand, as though to preserve this sudden silence; he raised his head, which towered

above the others of the band, and said, "Listen all of you, and not one speak, unless he is questioned. Children! the path along which we have travelled until now leads to the depths of hell. It is not a reproach which I am going to make you, I who am beyond all of you, I who am the worst of all; but listen to what I have to say to you. God, mercifully has called to me to alter my life; and I will alter it, I have already altered it; this does He to you all. Know therefore, and hold it for the truth, that I am resolved sooner to die, than henceforth to do anything contrary to His holy law. I withdraw from every one of you the wicked orders which you have received from me—you understand me; thus I command you to do nothing of that which was commanded you to do. And hold this also equally certain, that no one from this time forth shall commit evil under my protection, or in my service. Who desires to remain with me on these conditions shall be to me like a son; and I shall be happy, when a day of famine arrives, to satisfy the last of you with the last morsel of bread which remains to me in the house. Who does not desire this, shall receive the salary which is due to him, and something more—he can take his departure; but he shall never more set foot here, unless he wishes to change his life, and then he will always be received with open arms. Reflect upon this to-night; to-morrow morning, I shall call you, one by one, to return me your answer; and then I will give you fresh orders. For the present, let every one retire to his station. And God, who has exercised such mercy towards me, send you good thoughts."

Here he ended, and all remained silent. However varied and tumultuous were the thoughts which agitated these brains, not a single sign of them was outwardly observable. They were accustomed to receive their master's voice as the manifestation of a will which was not to be gainsaid; and this voice, announcing that the will was changed, gave not the slightest indication that it had become weak. Neither did it occur to one among them that, having been converted, they could treat him with insult, or speak to him as to another man. They saw in him a saint; but one of those saints who are painted with an elevated head, and a sword in one hand. Besides fear, they also felt for him (more particularly those who were born in his dominions, and this was the greater portion,) the affection of subjects to their lord; they were filled all of them with admiration of him; and in his presence they experienced a sort of bashfulness which even the most rude and petulant experience before a superiority which they have already recognised. Besides, the things which they had just heard from these lips were, although odious to their ears, neither false, nor entirely strange to their minds; if they had a thousand times joked upon them, it was not because they did not believe them, so much as to prevent by these very jokes, the fear which would have been occasioned by thinking seriously about them. And now seeing the effect in a mind like their master's, there was not one who, more or less, did not apply his mind to its contemplation, at least for some time. Added to all this, that some among them having been in the morning beyond the valley, had been the first to hear the great news, had both seen and related the

joy, the confidence of the populace, the love and the veneration for the Unknown, which had filled the place of their hatred and terror. So that, in the man whom they had always regarded with fear, even although they themselves formed part of his strength, they saw now the wonder, the idol of a multitude; they saw him elevated above all others, in a very different manner than before, but not less elevated; always above the common herd—always the head.

They were confounded, uncertain one of the other, and even of themselves. This one tormented himself; another formed designs of where he should go and seek shelter and employment; another questioned himself whether he should be able to become a worthy man; another, moved by these words, felt a certain inclination to follow them; and a fifth, without resolving anything, proposed promising to remain here for the present, to eat the bread which was thus generously offered, and which was so scarce, and thus gain time—no one breathed. And when the Unknown, at the end of his address, again raised this commanding hand, in sign to them to depart, they very quietly, like a flock of sheep, went forth. He went out after them, and pausing first of all in the middle of the court, he stood to watch in the twilight how they disbanded themselves, and how each one went to his post. He next ascended into the castle, took his lamp, and again traversed the courts, the corridors, the halls, visited all the entrances, and then having seen that all was quiet, he at length retired to repose. Yes, to repose, because he was overcome by sleep.

Never had he, under any circumstances, upon any

one single occasion, been so oppressed by affairs, at once so embarrassing and so urgent, and yet he was overpowered by sleep. Remorse, which the night before had arisen within him, and which was not to be soothed, sent forth cries even still louder, more severe, more arbitrary; and yet he had sleep upon him. The order, the species of government, established by him in so many years, with so much pains, with so singular a mixture of audacity and perseverance, he himself had endangered by a few words. The entire dependence of his household, their complete subjection to his will, their robbers' fidelity, upon which he had so long been accustomed to repose, he had now himself destroyed; his means of assistance he had changed into a mountain of difficulties, he had himself sown confusion, and in his own house; and yet spite of all this, he was overpowered with sleep! He therefore entered his chamber, approached the bed which the night before he had found so full of thorns, and knelt down beside it with the intention of prayer. He discovered in a deep recess of his mind, the prayer which he had been taught to repeat when a child; he began to repeat it, and these words, which had remained such a long time forgotten, returned one by one to his remembrance. He experienced a mingling of indescribable emotions—a certain delight, in this return to the habits of innocence—an increase of grief at the thought of the abyss which he placed between that time and the present—a burning desire, by deeds of expiation, to gain a new conscience, to arrive at a state of mind more nearly allied to that innocence which he could never again hope to attain; and together with these

emotions, gratitude and confidence in that mercy which could conduct him to this state of mind, and which had already given him so many tokens that it desired this for him.

Thus ended this day, still so celebrated when our author wrote; yet of which, at the present day, had it not been for him, nothing would be known, at least none of the particulars; for Ripamonti and Rivola, cited above, only say that this so notorious tyrant, after a conversation with Federigo, wonderfully altered the manner of his life from that time forth. And how many are there who have read the works of these two authors? Fewer even than those who will read this book of ours. And who knows, if in the valley itself, had any one now the desire to seek, and the ability to discover information, whether there would be yet found remaining any confused tradition of the events? So much has occurred between then and now!

CHAPTER XXV.

THE day following, in Lucia's native village, and in all the territory of Lecco, nothing was spoken of but her, the Unknown, the Archbishop, and another person, who, however much it pleased him to be spoken of in the world, would in the present instance have desired less notoriety—we would say Don Rodrigo.

Do not imagine, however, that his deeds had not been spoken of before; they had been—but only in interrupted and secret conversations; it was necessary that two people knew each other very well, before they opened their hearts upon such a subject, and even then they were far from entering into it with all the warmth of sentiment which they would have been able to do,—for men, generally speaking, when they cannot without serious danger express their indignation, not only exhibit less, and keep concealed within them that which they feel, but also really feel less. But now, who could prevent themselves inquiring about and reasoning upon an event which had made so much noise, an event in which the hand of Providence was visible, and in which two such distinguished personages played such distinguished parts? In one of whom such a courageous love of justice united itself with so much authority; in the other, in which it seemed that oppression personified, had humbled itself, and that so to say the whole

bravo-system had laid down arms and besought repose. Through such comparisons Don Rodrigo became somewhat petty. People now understood what it really was to torment innocence, in order to dishonour it, to persecute it with such impudent obstinacy, with such atrocious violence, with such abominable deceit. There passed before them in review upon this occasion all the other deeds of prowess performed by this Signor; and they now spoke just as they felt, every one encouraged by finding that all were agreed. There was a murmuring, a general tumult, at a considerable distance from Don Rodrigo's palace, however, for reason of the bravoes which this man had around him.

A considerable share of this public odium fell also upon his friends and courtiers. The Signor Podestà was well called over the coals; he who was always deaf, blind, and dumb towards the acts of this tyrant; but this took place far from the presence of the Signor Podestà; for if he had no bravoes, he had at least constables. With the Doctor Azzecca-Garbugli, who possessed only useless words and cabalistical knowledge, and with other small courtiers, his equals, they were not so ceremonious; they were pointed after, and such glances cast at them, that for some time they considered it best not to shew themselves in the streets.

Don Rodrigo was struck, as by a thunder-bolt, at this unexpected news, so different from the intelligence he had daily awaited, nay, almost every moment expected to receive; he kept himself shut up in his castle alone with his bravoes, for two days, to devour his rage; the third, he set out for Milan. Had there

been only the dull murmur of the people, although affairs had gone on so unfortunately, he would have remained in the country on purpose to oppose it, as well as to seek an occasion of making one of the most insolent an example for all the rest; but what drove him away was the certain intelligence that the Cardinal was also coming to visit this part of the territory. His uncle, the Count, who only knew as much of this history as Attilio had told him, would certainly have expected that, upon an occasion such as the present, Don Rodrigo should have played a distinguished part, and have received in public the most marked reception from the Cardinal; but one sees how much disposed he was to such a mode of conduct. He would have expected it, and would have had the whole minutely related to him; for this was an important occasion, which would shew in what esteem their family was held by a powerful authority. To remove himself, however, from such an annoying embarrassment, Don Rodrigo arose one morning before the sun,—placed himself in a carriage, with Griso, and with other bravoës outside, both before and behind, and leaving word that the rest of the domestics should follow,—he departed like a fugitive (if we may be permitted to elevate our characters by an illustrious comparison), like Catiline leaving Rome, raging with anger, and swearing to return quickly and accomplish his vengeance.

Meanwhile the Cardinal continued his progress, each day visiting one of the parishes situated in the territory of Lecco. The day on which he should arrive at Lucia's village, a great portion of the inhabitants had gone forth along the road to meet him.

At the entrance of the village, exactly at one side of the cottage belonging to our two women, there was erected a triumphant arch constructed of wood, covered with straw and moss, ornamented by green boughs of the holm and holly, distinguished by their scarlet berries. The front of the church was decorated with tapestry; from the windows were hung coverlets, sheets, and children's swaddling clothes, disposed after the fashion of pennons; all the few necessities, in short, which could be made to appear superfluities. Towards evening, the time when the Cardinal was expected, those who had remained at home, old people, women and children for the most part, also set out to meet him, preceded by Don Abbondio, who was gloomy in the midst of all this festivity, partly owing to the uproar which confounded him, to the stir of people around and behind him, which he kept repeating made his head turn round, and also occasioned by the secret fear that the women might have told certain things to the Cardinal, and that he should have to relate to him the affair of the marriage. At length was seen the Cardinal, or rather the crowd, in the midst of which was he in his litter, surrounded by his suite; for of all this there was only to be perceived an indication in the air above this crowd of heads, a piece of the cross borne by the Chaplain, who rode along on a mule. The people who were with Don Abbondio hastened to join the others, and he, having said three or four times, "slowly, proceed in a line; what are you doing?" angrily turned back, and grumbling, "it is a Babel, it is a real Babel!" entered the church, which was empty, and prepared to await the Cardinal there.

The Cardinal came along, bestowing benedictions with his hand, and receiving them from the mouths of the crowd, which the attendants could scarcely, spite of all their efforts, keep a little back. This being Lucia's village, the inhabitants desired to do the Cardinal peculiar honour; but this was not easy, as it was the custom wherever he arrived for all the people to do the very most they could. Even at the very commencement of his Archbishop's career, at his first solemn entrance into the cathedral, the crowd and the impetuosity of the people behind him was such, that his life was feared for; and some gentlemen who were near him had drawn their swords to terrify and repulse the crowd. Such was the disorder and violence of those times, that even in the general desire to do honour to their bishop in the church, and again, in the desire to moderate the people's enthusiasm, blood was nearly shed. And even this defence would have been insufficient, had not the Master and Deputy-master of the ceremonies, a Clerici and a Picozzi, two young priests, strong both in body and mind, raised him in their arms and carried him with care from the door to the high-altar. This first entrance into the church may be, without joking, counted among his pastoral fatigues, and among the dangers which he had passed through, even after he had made many episcopal visits.

He entered this church also with difficulty; proceeded to the altar, where, having some time stood in prayer, he addressed, as was his custom, a short discourse to the people, regarding his love for them, his desire for their salvation, and in what manner they should dispose themselves for the divine service of

those of her mother, or rather she had none; she had entirely abandoned herself to the will of Providence. She sought, therefore, to let these discourses drop, or said in general terms, that she had no longer any hope or desire regarding things in this world, except the desire of being soon able to join her mother; mostly a flood of tears opportunely cut short her words.

“Dost thou know why this seems so to thee?” said Agnese; “it is because thou hast suffered so much, and it does not seem to thee that all can again be well. But leave all to the Lord; and if — And only let a gleam appear, scarcely a gleam of hope, and then thou wilt be able to tell me whether thou art still of the same mind.” Lucia kissed her mother and wept.

For the rest, between them and their hosts there had arisen a great friendship; and where should it arise, if not between the benefited and their benefactors, when both one and the other are excellent people? Agnese especially had great gossips with the mistress of the house. The tailor also gave them some amusement with his histories and moral discourses; and at dinner, more particularly, he had always something interesting to relate of Boro d’Antona, or of the Desert Fathers.

At a short distance from this village there resided a married pair of importance — Don Ferrante and Donna Pressede; their surname of course has remained in the pen of our Anonymous. Donna Pressede was an old gentlewoman, much inclined to doing good; a profession certainly the most worthy which a woman can exercise; but which, carried too far, may do

mischief, like all other things. In order to do good, it is necessary to know what is good; and as in every thing else, we can only know this through our passions, by means of our judgments and our ideas, which very often may chance to be erroneous. Donna Pressede stood in the same relationship to her ideas which one ought to do with one's friends; she had few, but to these she was very much attached; unfortunately, however, among these few, there were some which were distorted, and these were not less dear to her. Therefore it sometimes happened that she proposed for good, that which was really not so, or that she chose means which would bring about an opposite effect, or that she believed other means lawful which in effect were unlawful, and this from a confused supposition that he who does more than his duty, may direct his conduct as he pleases. It not unfrequently occurred that in an affair she would often not see what was real, and again would see what there really was not; many other similar things happened to her, which may, and do often, happen to all people, not even excepting the very best; but to Donna Pressede these things happened very often, and not unfrequently all at the same time.

Hearing Lucia's singular history, and all that upon the occasion was said about the young girl, she was seized with a curiosity to see her, and sent a coach, attended by an old usher, to fetch the mother and daughter. The latter felt no inclination to comply, and requested the tailor who had borne this embassy to them, to discover some means of excusing her. As long as it had merely been insignificant people who desired to see the girl of the miracle, the tailor

had willingly performed this service; but in the present instance the refusal appeared to him a species of rebellion. He made many excuses, many exclamations, said many things, "that this could not be done, that this was a great family, and that one could not say no to gentlefolks; that this might be a piece of good fortune to them; and that the Signora Pressede was a holy woman," and in short, said so many things, that Lucia was obliged to surrender, all the sooner too, as Agnese confirmed these reasons by repeating as often "certainly, certainly."

When they arrived before the great lady, she gave them a very grand reception, and made them many congratulations; she questioned, she counselled them; and all this, with a certain superiority almost innate, but softened by many humble expressions, tempered by a deal of zeal, embellished by a deal of godliness, so that Agnese, almost immediately, and Lucia after a short time, began to feel relieved from the oppressive respect which at first this lordly presence had inspired them with; nay, they even felt a certain attraction in it. * But to be brief, Donna Pressede, hearing that the Cardinal had engaged to find an asylum for Lucia, and excited by the desire of at once seconding and forestalling this good intention, offered to take the young girl into her house, where, without being devoted to any particular service, she could, according to her own pleasure, assist the other women in their work. She added that she would inform his lordship.

Besides the clear and immediate good which there was in a deed such as this, Donna Pressede saw and proposed to herself another, one much more consider-

able according to her; and this was to minister to a mind diseased, to place in the right path a young girl who stood very much in need of such guidance. For, from the first time she had heard speak of Lucia, she had immediately persuaded herself that a girl who could have engaged herself to a good-for-nothing fellow, a man guilty of sedition, to a rascal, in short, must have some defect, some hidden fault. 'Tell me who thou keepest company with, and I will tell thee who thou art.' The sight of Lucia had confirmed this persuasion. Not that, at the bottom, as she said, she did not appear to her a good young girl; but there were many things to be said. This little cast down head, with this chin buried in her throat, this manner of not replying, or of replying only in a few words, as though unwillingly, might indicate modesty; but it could equally denote obstinacy; it was not difficult to divine that this little head had its own ideas. And then this blushing every moment, and these sighs — and these two large eyes, which did not please Donna Pressede at all! She felt certain, as though she knew it from very good authority, that all Lucia's misfortunes were a punishment from heaven for her friendship with this good-for-nothing — and a warning to her to release herself; and, such being the case, she proposed to co-operate in such a work. Since, as she often said to others and to herself, all her study was to second the will of heaven; but she often made a gross blunder in mistaking her own brain for heaven. However regarding her second intention, she carefully preserved herself from giving the slightest hint. For one of her maxims was this, that to succeed in doing good to people, the first thing, in most cases, is not to make them a party in the design.

The mother and daughter looked at each other. Considering the sad necessity there was that they should part, this offer appeared to both of them acceptable, were it for no other reason than that this villa was so near their village; where, even at the very worst, they could meet and be together, whilst the family was in the country. They read in each other's eyes this consent, and both turned towards Donna Pressede with those thanks which accept. She renewed her politeness and promises, and said that she would immediately send a letter to be presented to the Cardinal.

The women having taken their departure, she caused the letter to be written by Don Ferrante, who, being a literary man, as we shall afterwards relate more particularly, she employed as her secretary upon important occasions. And such a one being now required, Don Ferrante exercised all his learning, and giving the draft to his wife to copy, warmly recommended her to be careful of the orthography, which was one of the many things which he had studied. Donna Pressede copied it very carefully, and despatched it to the tailor's house. This occurred two or three days before the Cardinal sent the litter to carry the women back to their village.

Having arrived there, they descended at the parsonage, where the Cardinal was staying. He ordered them immediately to be introduced; the Chaplain, who was the first to see them, hastened to obey the command, detaining them only so long as was necessary to give them, in all haste, a few instructions regarding the etiquette to be used towards his lordship, and regarding the titles to be addressed to him, a

thing which the Chaplain was accustomed to do whenever he could do it unknown to the Cardinal. It was for this poor man a constant torment, the seeing how little order reigned around Federigo in this particular. "All," said he to the household, "through the too great goodness of this blessed man, through his great familiarity." And he related how he had heard even more than once, with his own ears, people reply, "Yes, sir; no, sir."

In this moment the Cardinal was discoursing with Don Abbondio regarding the affairs of his parish, so that he was not able to give, as he would have desired, his instructions to the women. He could only in passing them on his way out, when they were coming forward, give them a glance, which shewed that he was satisfied with them, and that they should continue, like good souls, to say nothing.

After the first reception on one side, and the first curtsies on the other side were over, Agnese drew the letter from her bosom, and presented it to the Cardinal, saying, "This is from the Signora Donna Pressede, who says she knows your lordship very well, my lord; for it is natural that all great people should know each other. When you have read it you will see."

"Good," said Federigo, when he had read it, and extracted the sense from all the flowers of Don Ferrante's style. "I know this house sufficiently to feel certain that Lucia has been invited from a good intention, and that there she will be safe from the snares and violence of her persecutor." What conception he had formed of Donna Pressede's head, we are not told. Probably she was not the person he would have

selected for such a purpose; but, as we have said, or given it to be understood elsewhere, it was not his custom to disarrange affairs which did not concern him, in order to arrange them better.

“Accept quietly this separation, and the uncertainty in which you are placed; but,” continued he, “have confidence that this trial may soon end, and that the Lord will conduct all to the termination He has ordained; but consider as certain that whatever He wills will be the best for you.” He bestowed on Lucia in particular some other friendly remembrance, and spoke words of comfort to them both, blessed them, and allowed them to depart. Scarcely were they outside the door, than they found themselves in a perfect swarm of their friends; all the community, one might say, who were expecting them, and who conducted them to their house as in triumph. There was among all these women quite a rivalry of congratulations, of condolence, of questions, and all exclaimed with displeasure upon hearing that Lucia should depart the following day. The men emulated each other in offering their services; every one desired to keep guard before the cottage that night. Regarding which circumstance our Anonymous thought well to make a proverb—Do you desire many to assist you? endeavour to have no need of assistance.

So many warm receptions, confounded and confused Lucia; Agnese, however, did not get confused about such a little matter. But, in reality, this did even Lucia good, distracting her somewhat from the thoughts and remembrances which, even in the midst of this uproar, awoke within her, standing, as she did,

upon the threshold, in this little room, among so many familiar objects.

At the tolling of the bell which announced that Divine service was at hand, all moved towards the church, and this was for our women another triumphal progress.

Service being over, Don Abbondio, who had run to see whether Perpetua had arranged every thing well for the meal, was summoned by the Cardinal. He immediately hastened to his grand guest, who allowed him to approach quite near, when, "Signor Curato," he commenced,—and these words were spoken in a manner to make one understand that they were the commencement of a long and serious discourse,—“Signor Curato, why have you not united in matrimony this poor Lucia with her affianced husband?”

“They have let the cat out of the bag this morning,” thought Don Abbondio, and muttering replied, “His illustrious lordship will have heard speak of the disturbances which have arisen in this affair; there was such a confusion, that no one even at the present day can fathom them, as your illustrious lordship can infer from the young woman’s only arriving here after so many accidents, as though by a miracle, and from the young man’s being, after so many accidents, one does not know where.”

“I ask,” resumed the Cardinal, “whether it is true that, before all these events occurred, you refused to celebrate the marriage when this was requested of you on the appointed day; and I also demand the wherefore?”

“Truly —— if your illustrious lordship knew ——

what intimations —— what terrible commands I have had given me not to speak ——” And he paused, without concluding his sentence, with a certain manner which was intended respectfully to give the Cardinal to understand that it would be indiscreet to desire to know more.

“But,” said the Cardinal, with a voice and mien much graver than usual, “it is your bishop who, through his duty and for your justification, desires to know from yourself wherefore you have not performed that which in the regular way it was your bounden duty to perform.”

“My lord,” said Don Abbondio, making himself very, very small, “I have not yet wished to say —— But it has appeared to me that these being such entangled affairs, so old, and without remedy, it was useless to meddle with them. However, however, I say —— I know that your illustrious lordship will not betray a poor clergyman. For my lord sees well that his lordship cannot be everywhere at the same time; and I remain here exposed —— However, if you command me, I will tell, I will tell all.”

“Speak! I desire nothing but to find you without blame.”

Upon this Don Abbondio began to relate the sad history, but he was silent regarding the principal name, and substituted in its stead ‘a great Signor;’ thus being as prudent as he could in such a fearful strait.

“And you have had no other motive?” demanded the Cardinal, when Don Abbondio had ended.

“But perhaps I have not explained myself suffi-

ciently," replied the latter; "under pain of death they have intimated to me that I should not perform this marriage."

"And this has appeared to you reason sufficient for leaving an important duty unfulfilled?"

"I have always sought to perform my duty, even much to my own inconvenience, but where life is concerned ——"

"And when you presented yourself to the church," said Federigo, with a still graver accent, "to assume this ministry, did the church give you security for your life? Did she tell you that the duties annexed to the ministry were free from every obstacle, exempt from every danger? Or did she, perhaps, tell you that where danger commenced the duty ceased? Or did she not expressly say the contrary? Has she not informed you that she sent you forth like a lamb among wolves? Did you not know that there were violent men, to whom what you were commanded to do might be displeasing? He from whom we have our doctrine and example, and in imitation of whom we allow ourselves to be called, and call ourselves, pastors, coming upon earth to exercise this office, made it perhaps a condition that his life should be saved? And to save it, to preserve it, I say, these few days longer on the earth, at the expense of charity and duty, was there need of the holy unction, of the imposition of hands, of the grace of the priesthood? The world suffices to give this virtue, to teach this doctrine. What do I say? Oh, shame! the world itself refuses it; the world also makes its own laws, laws which prescribe evil as well as good; it has its gospel also—a gospel of pride and hatred; and will

not even permit it to be said love of life is a reason for transgressing its commands. It does not permit this, and it is obeyed. And we!—we sons and messengers of the promise!—what would the church be, if this your language were the language of all your brethren? Where would she now be, had she appeared in the world with such doctrines?”

Don Abbondio stood with a bowed head; his soul attacked by these arguments was like a chicken in the talons of a falcon, which holds it suspended in an unknown region—in an air which it has never breathed. Seeing how necessary it was to reply something, he said with a certain forced submission, “My illustrious Signor, I was wrong. If life is not to be counted as something, I know nothing else to say. But when one has to do with certain people, with people who have power in their hands, and who will not hear reason, I do not know what there is to gain, even in putting on a brave face. This is a Signor whom one can neither vanquish, nor escape from with impunity.”

“And do you not know that to suffer for the sake of justice is our conquest? And if you do not know this, what do you preach? of what are you the teacher? What is this good news you announce to the poor? Who expects you to overcome strength by strength? Certainly it will not be demanded of you at the day of judgment whether you have been able to make the mighty obey you, for neither was this your mission, nor were the means given you. But it will certainly be demanded of you, whether you have employed the means which were in your hands to do that which was prescribed you, even when the

powerful should have the temerity to prohibit you from doing it."

"These saints are really curious," thought Don Abbondio meanwhile to himself. "The substance of all this is, that the loves of two young people lie nearer his heart than the life of a poor priest"—— And as far as himself was concerned, he would have been very well pleased that the discourse should end here; but he saw the Cardinal, at every pause, remain as though he awaited a reply—a confession, an apology, or something, in short.

"I return to what I said, my lord," he at length replied, "that I was wrong—— Courage one cannot give oneself."

"And wherefore then, I might say to you, did you engage in a ministry which obliges you to stand in warfare against the passions of the age? But how, I will rather say, is it you do not think that there is God, who will infallibly bestow courage upon you, if in this ministry, in which you have entered yourself, courage is necessary for the fulfilment of your obligations? Do you believe that all the millions of martyrs had naturally courage—that they naturally thought nothing of their lives? So many tender youths who just began to taste the joys of existence, so many old people accustomed to lament that it was so near its close, so many maidens, so many wives, so many mothers? All have received courage, for courage was necessary, and they had faith. Knowing your weaknesses and your duties, have you thought how to prepare yourself for those difficult circumstances in which you might happen to find yourself, and in which you have in reality found yourself? Ah! if for so many years of

a pastor's life you have loved your flock—and how should you not have loved it?—if you have reposed in it your heart, your cares, your delights, courage ought not to fail you, for love is intrepid. Well, if you love them, those who are confided to your spiritual care, those whom you call children, when you see two of them menaced, together with you——ah! certainly as the weakness of the flesh will have made you tremble for yourself, so will love have made you tremble for them. You will have been humbled by this first fear, because it was an effect of your misfortune; you will have implored strength to vanquish it, to drive it forth, because it was a temptation; but holy fear for others is noble, this fear for your children, you will have listened to it; this you will not have silenced—this will have excited, constrained you to think of doing all that was possible to defend them from the danger which menaced them —— What idea has this fear, this love inspired you with? What have you done for them? What have you thought of?"

And he was silent, like one who awaits a reply.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AT a demand such as this, Don Abbondio, who had a deal of trouble to reply to questions less direct, remained without articulating a word. And to say the truth, even we, with this manuscript before us, with the pen in our hand, having only to contend with phrases, nor anything else to fear than the criticism of our readers, even we, I say, feel a certain repugnance to proceed. We find an extraordinary something in thus, with so little fatigue, bringing into the field so many beautiful precepts of fortitude and of love, of active eagerness for others, of unlimited sacrifice of self. But reflecting that these things were spoken by one who could perform them, we proceed with courage.

“ You do not reply ? ” continued the Cardinal. “ Ah ! if you had performed your part, that which charity, that which duty required, let affairs have gone on as they might, you would not now stand in want of a reply. You see then yourself what you have done. You have obeyed the command of iniquity, without troubling yourself about that which duty prescribed. You have carefully obeyed this command : wickedness presented itself to you to intimate its desire to you ; but it wished to remain concealed from those who would have been able to fly it, and place themselves in safety ; wickedness desired that no noise should be

made, it desired secrecy so as to mature at its leisure its designs of deceit and strength; it commanded transgression and silence,—you have transgressed and have not spoken. I now demand whether you have not done even more than this; tell me whether it is true, that you have given false pretexts for your refusal, so as not to reveal the motive.” And he paused here likewise, as though again expecting an answer.

“This also has been reported by the tattling women,” thought Don Abbondio; but he gave no sign that he had anything to say; and the Cardinal resumed — “If it is true that you have told these poor young people that which was not the truth, so as to keep them in ignorance, in obscurity, as this wicked man desired — then I must believe it; then there only remains for me to blush with you for your conduct, and to hope that you will weep with me over it. See, to what this eagerness has conducted you—good God! and but this moment you alleged it as your excuse—this eagerness after this present life, which must come to an end. It has led you — combat freely these words, if they appear to you unjust—receive them as a salutary humiliation, if they are not — it has led you to cheat the weak, and to lie to your children.”

“This is the way of the world,” again said Don Abbondio to himself; “for this very Satan,” here he thought of the Unknown, “he had embraced; and for me, for a half lie, told only to save my life, there is all this uproar. But they are the superiors; they are always right. It is my ill-star which causes me to be fallen on by all—even by the saints.” Aloud he said, “I have done wrong, I know that I have

done wrong; but what ought I to have done in a misfortune of this kind?"

"You ask this again? And have I not told it you? Must I again tell you? Love, my son—love and pray. Then you would have felt that iniquity may certainly have threats to menace, blows to give, but not commands; you would have united, according to the law of God, those whom man wished to separate; you would have exercised that ministry which these unfortunate innocents had a right to request of you. God would have remained responsible for the consequences, for His commands would have been obeyed; but you have obeyed other commands, and it is you who will be responsible for the consequences—and what consequences! But how did you know that all human means failed you, that no way of escape was open to you, when you scarcely looked around you, scarcely thought or sought after it? Now, you know that these your poor children, had they been married, would themselves have thought of their escape; they were disposed to fly the face of this powerful man, they had already arranged their place of refuge. But even without this, did it never occur to you that you had a superior? And how could he possess the authority to reprimand you for having failed in the performance of your duty, unless he were also obliged to aid you in its performance? Why did you not think of informing your Archbishop of the impediments which infamous violence had placed in the way of your ministerial duty?"

"Perpetua's advice!" thought Don Abbondio, full of anger; in whose mind, in the midst of all these discourses, was most livingly impressed the image of

these bravoës, and the thought that Don Rodrigo was alive and well, and would one day or other return glorious, triumphant, and enraged. And although this dignity, this aspect, and this language, rendered him confused, and inspired him with a certain terror, still it was not a terror which overcame him, or prevented him from resisting; for there was in this thought the knowledge that, even at the very worst, the Cardinal would not adopt either muskets, swords, or bravoës.

“How is it you did not think,” continued Federigo, “that were no other asylum open to these innocent victims; that there was I to receive them, to place them in safety, if you had directed them to me, directed them to a bishop, as forsaken ones, as something belonging to him, as a precious portion, I will not say of his charge, but of his riches? And as for you, I should have become uneasy regarding you; I ought not to have slept before I was sure that not a hair of your head would be hurt. Do you imagine I should not have known how to place your life in safety? And this man who was so violent, do you not think that his violence would immediately have abated, when he knew that his plots were observed far off, observed by me; that I watched, and was resolved to use in your defence all the means in my hand? Do you not know that, if a man promises often more than he is able to do, he also does not unfrequently threaten more than he dare afterwards perform? Do you not know that iniquity does not base itself alone upon its own strength, but also upon the credulity and fear of others?”

“Precisely the reasoning of Perpetua,” thought

Don Abbondio again, without reflecting that this agreement of his servant and Federigo Borromeo, in their judgment regarding what he ought and could have done, was a very great argument against him.

"But you," continued and concluded the Cardinal, "have neither seen nor desired to see other than your temporal danger. How could it appear to you important enough for you to neglect for it every thing else?"

"It was because I saw those terrible countenances," escaped from Don Abbondio; "because I heard those words. Your illustrious lordship speaks well; but you should have been in the situation of a poor priest, and have found yourself in the same circumstances."

Scarcely had he spoken these words, than he bit his tongue; it seemed to him that he had allowed himself to be too easily conquered by his anger, and said to himself,—“now will fall the hail.” But timidly raising his eyes, he was quite astonished to see this man, whom he had never been able to understand, change from his former air of severe and imperious gravity, to a gravity full of sorrow and tenderness.

"It is only too true!" said Federigo, "such is our miserable and terrible condition. We rigorously exact from others that which God only knows whether we should be ready ourselves to give—we judge, correct, reprimand; and God only knows what we should do in the same circumstances, what we have done in similar. But woe to me if I should measure the duties of others by my own weakness, and make it the rule of my instruction! Yet, it is certain that, together with doctrines, I ought also to give examples, in order

not to render myself like the Pharisee, who imposes upon others burthens which they cannot bear, and which he himself will not touch with one of his fingers. Listen, my son, my brother: the errors of those who command are often more observed by others than by themselves; if you know that through cowardice, through any feeling of personal respect, I have neglected any duty, tell me candidly, shew me where I have failed; so that, where the example has been wanting, at least the confession may be supplied. Freely reprove me for my acts of weakness; and then the words will acquire more value in my mouth, for you will feel more truly that they are not my words, but the words of Him who can give both you and me the necessary strength to do that which He prescribes."

"O what a holy man! but what a torment!" thought Don Abbondio again to himself; "he has also weaknesses; he wishes that I should examine, criticise, accuse even him!"

He then said aloud, "O my lord, do you joke? Who does not know the bold heart, the intrepid zeal of your illustrious lordship?" And to himself he added, "only too intrepid."

"I do not ask praise from you, which makes me tremble," said Federigo, "for God knows my failings; and those which I know myself are sufficient to confound me. But I have desired, I should desire that we humble ourselves together before Him, so that we may confide in each other. I desire through my love of you, that you should feel how much your conduct has been, how much your language is, opposed to the law which you nevertheless preach, and by which you will be judged."

“All turn against me,” said Don Abbondio; “but these persons who have reported against me have not said that they introduced themselves into my house by treason, so as to surprise me into performing a marriage contrary to the rules of the church.”

“They have told me this, my son; but what grieves me, what astonishes me, is to see that you again desire to excuse yourself; that you think of excusing yourself, by accusing others; that you discover subject of accusation in what ought to be part of your confession. Who was it that, I will not say, caused them, but tempted them, to do what they have done? Would they have sought this irregular course, had not the legitimate one been closed to them?—would they have thought of entrapping their pastor, if they had been received by him with open arms, had they been aided and counselled by him?—would they have surprised him, had he not concealed himself? And you will throw the blame of this upon them? And you are angry that, after so much misfortune—what do I say? in the midst of misfortune, they have spoken a word of alleviation to their, to your pastor? That the complaints of the oppressed, of the afflicted, should be hateful to the world, is no wonder, for such is the world; but to us! And of what advantage would their silence have been to you? Would you have gained anything had your cause been referred entirely to the judgment of God? And is it not a fresh reason for you to love these people (and how many other reasons have you not already), that they have given you occasion to hear the sincere voice of your bishop, that they have given you a means of knowing more fully, and in part discharging, the great debt

which you have contracted towards them? Ah! and should they have provoked, offended, tormented you, I say (and need I say this to you?) love them precisely on this account. Love them, for they have suffered, because they still suffer, because they are part of your flock, because they are weak, because you yourself have need of pardon, and to obtain this, only think of what avail may be their prayers!"

Don Abbondio remained silent; but this was no longer a forced and impatient silence; he remained silent, like one who has more things to think about than to say. The words which he heard were unexpected conclusions, new applications of a doctrine which, however, was not new to him, and which he could not resist. The sufferings of others, which his own personal fear had prevented him considering, now made a new impression upon him. And even although he did not experience all the remorse which this sermon was intended to produce (for this same personal fear was still at its post as protector), he still experienced some little; he felt a certain dissatisfaction with himself, a certain compassion for others, a mingled tenderness and humility. He was, if we may be allowed this comparison, like the damp and crushed wick of a taper, which, when presented to the flame of a great torch, at first smokes, hisses, sputters, and will have nothing to do with the flame, but at length takes light, and burns as well as it is able. He would have openly accused himself, he would have wept, had it not been for the thought of Don Rodrigo; but still he appeared so much touched, that the Cardinal was able to perceive that his words had not been without effect.

“Now,” continued Federigo, “one is a fugitive from his home, the other is about to abandon hers, both have reasons powerful enough to keep them far from this country, without any probability of their being united here, and content alone with the hope that God will unite them above; now, alas! they have no longer need of you; and you have no longer the opportunity of doing them good; nor can our shortsightedness foresee any possibility of this in the future. But who knows what God’s mercy may not prepare? Ah! do not allow such an opportunity to escape; seek for such an one, watch for it; pray that such an opportunity may arise!”

“I will not fail to do this, my lord; I will not fail indeed,” replied Don Abbondio, with a voice which in this moment really spoke from his heart.

“Ah! yes, my son, yes,” exclaimed Federigo; and with an affectionate dignity he concluded: “Heaven knows how much I have desired to hold other discourse with you. Both of us have already seen much; and heaven knows whether it has not been painful to me thus to sadden your old age by reproaches, when I should so much more willingly have employed this time which we have passed together, in mutual consolation, and in speaking of the blessed hope which we have so nearly attained. Please God, that the words which I have been obliged to employ towards you, may be of use to both of us; that they may prevent my having to account at the awful day of judgment, for keeping you in an office in which you have so unhappily mistaken your duty. Let us repair lost time—midnight is near; the bridegroom will not linger; let us keep our lamps burning. Let us pre-

sent our miserable empty hearts to God, so that He may fill them with that love which will redeem the past, which will assure the future, which will fear and hope, weep and rejoice, with that love which upon every occasion becomes the virtue of which we stand in need."

Having said this, he moved away, and Don Abbondio followed.

Here the Anonymous informs us that this was not the only conversation held by these two personages, neither was Lucia their only theme of discourse; but our friend informs us also, that he has refrained from giving us any of the others, fearing lest he should be drawn away from the principal subject of the relation. And it is from the same motive that he does not make mention of other very remarkable things, both done and said by Federigo, in the course of his visit. He is silent regarding his liberality, regarding the long standing feuds between individuals, families, nay, between entire villages, which he had the good fortune to extinguish, or, as alas! only too frequently happens, to suppress only for a time; neither does he mention those petty tyrants whom he succeeded in silencing, either for their whole lives, or at least for some time; things which did not fail to happen more or less in every place, in which this excellent man took up his abode.

He merely says, that the following morning, Donna Pressede, by appointment, came to fetch Lucia, and to present her compliments to the Cardinal, who praised the young girl, and warmly recommended her. Lucia took leave of her mother, you can imagine with what tears; and having gone forth from the little

cottage, she, for the second time, bade adieu to her village, with that feeling of bitterness which one experiences in leaving a place which was unspeakably dear, but which can be so no longer. But this was not her last leavetaking of her mother; for Donna Pressede had said that she should spend yet a few days in her villa, which was not very distant; and thus Agnese had promised her daughter, that there they would bid each other a more sorrowful farewell.

The Cardinal was also upon the point of departing for another visit, when the Curate of the parish in which was situated the castle of the Unknown, arrived and desired to speak with him. Having been introduced to the Cardinal, the Curate presented a small packet, and a letter from the Signor, in which he prayed Federigo to beg Lucia's mother to accept the hundred golden scudi contained in the packet, as her daughter's dowry, or as a sum to be employed in whatever manner might appear to her best; the Signor also besought Federigo to tell them also, that if ever, at any time, they thought he might be of service to them, that the young girl knew his abode only too well; and that, for himself, this would be a most desired piece of good fortune. The Cardinal had Agnese immediately summoned, delivered the message, which was heard with as much satisfaction as astonishment, and then presented her with the roll of money, which she accepted without much ceremony. "God reward him," she said; "your lordship will be so good as to thank him many times for us, and not say one word of this to any one, for this is a country — Pray excuse me; I know very well that a Signor such as you does not gossip about such things; but — you understand me."

She returned home very quietly; shut herself up in her room, and opened the roll. Although she was prepared for what met her eye, she saw with astonishment in one heap such a quantity of sequins which were her own, sequins too which she never before had seen, except singly, and that but very rarely. She counted them, had a deal of trouble to arrange them together again, to pile them one upon another, for every moment they escaped her inexperienced fingers; at length she formed them into a roll as well as she could, wrapped them up in a rag, made them into a little heap, tied it well round with a small cord, and placed it in a corner of her straw bed. The remainder of that day she did nothing but turn this piece of good fortune over in her mind, form designs for the future, and sigh for the morrow. When she went to bed, she lay awake, her thoughts occupied with these hundred gold pieces she had under her; and having fallen asleep, she saw them in her dreams. With the dawn she rose, and immediately set forth on her road to the villa, where Lucia was.

The repugnance which Lucia felt at speaking of her vow had not diminished, yet she had resolved to master this sentiment, and open her heart to her mother in this conversation, which for so long a time would be the last.

Scarcely were they alone, than Agnese, with a countenance all animation, and in a low voice, as though some third person were present, began: "I have a great piece of news to tell thee;" and then related this unexpected good fortune.

"God bless this Signor," said Lucia; "thus, you will be enabled to live comfortably yourself, and do good to others."

“How?” replied Agnese; “dost thou not see how many things we can do with so much money? Listen: I have no one else but thee, but you two, I may say; for since Renzo began to speak to thee, I have always regarded him as my son. The only thing is, whether some misfortune may not have befallen him, as we have heard no tidings of him; but, dear me! must every thing go on badly? We will hope not, we will hope not. For myself I should have liked to lay my bones in my own country; but now that thou canst not remain here, thanks to this villain (and even the very idea of having him near me, the scoundrel, would make my village hateful to me), I will dwell with you anywhere. I was disposed before now to go with you two to the very end of the world; I have always had this desire; but without money, how was that to be managed? Dost thou understand now? The few pence which the poor lad had laid by with so much trouble and saving, the law has seized upon; but as a recompense the Lord has given this fortune to us. Therefore, when he has found the means to let us know whether he is living, where he is, and what his intentions are, I will come and fetch thee from Milan—I will come and fetch thee. Formerly this would have appeared to me a great undertaking; but misfortune brings experience; I have already been as far as Monza, and I know what it is to travel. I will take with me a man of resolution, a relation, Alessio di Maggianico, one may say—properly speaking there is not a single resolute man in the whole village; I will go with him to Milan; we pay the expenses, and — dost thou understand?”

But perceiving that, instead of becoming animated, Lucia could scarcely conceal her trouble, and only shewed tenderness, but no joy, she paused for a moment in the middle of her discourse, and then said, "But what is the matter with thee? Art not thou of my opinion?"

"Ah, my poor mother!" exclaimed Lucia, throwing one arm round her mother's neck, and concealing her face in her mother's bosom.

"What is the matter?" again anxiously demanded her mother.

"I should have told you before," replied Lucia, raising her head and drying her tears, "I should have told you before, but I had not the heart; pity me."

"But for what should I pity thee?"

"I can never be the wife of this poor youth."

"How? how?"

Lucia with her head bowed, scarcely breathing, but with her tears flowing fast, as though relating a thing which however unpleasant could not be remedied, at length confessed the vow which she had made, and joining her hands, she again asked pardon of her mother for not having spoken sooner, prayed her not to reveal this vow to a living soul, and besought her aid in its fulfilment.

Agnese was stupified and filled with consternation. She was ready to be angry with her daughter for thus having kept silence; but the grave thoughts occasioned by this intelligence, stifled her displeasure; she wished to say, what hast thou done? but this it appeared to her would be to quarrel with heaven, more particularly as Lucia painted anew, in still more living colours, that terrible night, her utter desolation,

and her unforeseen liberation; and how, in the midst of this misery, she had made this solemn vow. And as she listened, this and the other example of strange and terrible chastisements occasioned by the violation of some vow, examples which she had many a time heard related, and had related herself to her daughter, recurred to the mind of poor Agnese. Then, having remained sometime like one enchanted, she said, "And what wilt thou now do?"

"Now," replied Lucia, "it is for the Lord to care for us, for the Lord and the Madonna. I have placed myself in their hands; they have never yet abandoned me; they will not abandon me now, that — The only grace which I ask of the Lord, after the salvation of my soul is, that He will cause me to return with you; and this He will grant me, yes, this He will grant me. That day — in that carriage — ah, most Holy Virgin! — those men! — Who could have told me that they conducted me to one who the following day should conduct me to you?"

"But not to have told this immediately to thy mother!" said Agnese, in a certain angry tone of voice, which was, however, something softened by affection and compassion.

"Take pity on me; I had not the heart — and what would have been gained by afflicting you earlier?"

"And Renzo?" remarked Agnese, shaking her head.

"Ah!" exclaimed Lucia, starting, "I must no longer think of this poor youth. One sees that it was never destined — You see how the Lord himself has desired to keep us separate. And who

knows —— But no, no; God will have preserved him from danger, and will render him perhaps even happier without me.”

“But,” resumed the mother, “if thou hadst not bound thyself for ever, provided no misfortune had happened to Renzo, with this money I could have found a remedy for every thing.”

“But where would this very money have come from, had I not passed that night of suffering? It is the Lord who has ordained that all this should happen—His will be done!” And Lucia’s words were stifled by her tears.

At this unexpected argument, Agnese remained thoughtful. After a few moments, Lucia, keeping back her sobs, resumed, “Now that the thing is done, it is necessary to apply to it with good will; and you, my poor mother, you can assist me, first by praying to the Lord for your poor daughter, and then —— it is necessary that this poor youth should know. Think about this; do me this favour; for you can think about it. When you know where he is, let him be written to, find a man —— there is this very cousin Alessio, who is a prudent and charitable man, who has always wished us well, and who will not gossip; get him to write Renzo word how all has gone on, tell him where I am, what I have suffered, and that God has thus willed it; say that he must calm his mind, and that I never, never can be the wife of any one. Make him understand, but do it with a good grace; explain to him that I have promised, that I have really made a vow. When he understands that I have vowed to the Madonna —— he has always stood in the fear of God. And you, the first time

that you receive intelligence of him, let me be written to, let me know that he is well; and then —— let me know nothing more regarding him.”

Agnese, very much affected, assured her daughter that every thing should be done as she desired.

“I wish to say something else to you,” resumed Lucia; “if the poor youth had not had the misfortune to think of me, there would not have happened to him what has happened. He is a fugitive; they have destroyed his means of advancement, they have carried away his property, poor fellow! — and you know, because —— And we have so much money! Oh, mother! as the Lord has sent us so much money, and as you really regard this poor lad as your —— yes, as your son, oh! divide it with him! Assuredly, God will not let us want. Seek out a good opportunity, and send it to him, for heaven knows how much he stands in need of it!”

“Well,” replied Agnese, “I will certainly send it him. Poor lad! Why dost thou imagine I was so much pleased with the money? But ——! I came here so happy. Enough; I will send it him, poor Renzo! but he also —— I know what I would say; certain it is that money causes pleasure to those who are in want of it; but it is not this money which will make him happy!”

Lucia thanked her mother for this ready and liberal condescension with such a grateful and affectionate manner, that any observer would have perceived that still her heart was divided with Renzo, perhaps more than she herself imagined.

“And, poor woman, what shall I do without thee?” said Agnese, also weeping.

“ And I without you, my poor mother? and in a stranger’s house? and in that Milan ——! But the Lord will be with both of us; and He will re-unite us. In eight or nine months we shall see each other again; and by that time, or even before, I hope He will have arranged all, so that we may be no longer separated. Let us leave all to Him. I will unceasingly beseech this favour of the Madonna. If I had anything else to offer her I would offer it; but she is so full of mercy that she will grant me this favour without any offering.”

With these and similar expressions, with oft repeated words of lamentation and consolation, of complaint and resignation, with many recommendations and promises not to say any thing, with many tears, after long and renewed embraces, the two women separated, promising each other to meet again at furthest in the following autumn; as though all this depended upon themselves. However, a long time elapsed before Agnese could learn anything regarding Renzo. Neither letter nor message arrived from him; among all the people in the village and its neighbourhood, of whom she could ask news regarding him, there was not one who knew more than herself.

And she was not the only person who instituted a like vain search. The Cardinal Federigo had not merely as a matter of ceremony told the poor women that he would make inquiries after him; he had immediately written to gain intelligence. When he returned to Milan after his progress, he had received a reply in which he was informed that nothing was to be learned respecting this man; that certainly he had remained some time in the house of one of his rela-

tions in a certain village, where he had done nothing in any way to make himself remarkable; but that one morning he had suddenly disappeared, and that even his relation did not know what had become of him, and could only repeat certain contradictory reports, which were in circulation, according to which the young man had enlisted for the Levant, had gone into Germany, or had perished in crossing a river. The correspondent wrote that he should not fail to be on the watch, and that should anything more positive occur, he would immediately impart it to his very illustrious and reverend lordship.

Later, these and other reports spread themselves through the territory of Lecco, and consequently reached the ears of Agnese. The poor woman did all in her power to make out which was the truth, and so arrive at the fountain-head; but she never succeeded in discovering more than mere *on dits*, which even at the present day are sufficient in themselves to attest many things. Scarcely had one piece of news been related to her, than there came another friend and told her, that this was really nothing, but he did this only to relate himself one equally strange and gloomy. These were all idle rumours. Here is the fact.

The governor of Milan, the lieutenant-general in Italy, Don Gonzalo Fernandes di Cordova, had loudly complained to the Venetian Ambassador at Milan, that a scoundrel, a public thief, a promoter of pillage and murder, the notorious Lorenzo Tramaglino, who even when in the hands of the constables had excited an insurrection in order to free himself, had been received in the Bergamascan territory. The Amba-

sador replied that he had heard nothing of it; but that he would write to Venice, so as to give his Excellency the explanation which he might require.

In Venice, it was the maxim to second and encourage the inclination of the Milanese silk-weavers to transport themselves into the Bergamascan territory; there to offer them many advantages, and above all, that without which every thing else is worthless—security. Therefore Bortolo was confidentially informed, it is not exactly known by whom, that Renzo was no longer safe in that part of the country, and that he would do well to enter some other manufactory, changing his name for some time. Bortolo immediately understood what was meant, asked no questions, but ran to his cousin, related the affair to him, took him in a little carriage to another silk-manufactory, distant about fifteen miles, and presented him under the name of Antonio Rivolta to the master, who was also a native of the state of Milan, and an old acquaintance of his. This good man, although the times were bad, did not require much pressing to receive a workman who came recommended for honesty and ability by a worthy man who understood such things. And upon trial he could only congratulate himself upon his acquisition, although in the beginning it seemed that the young man must be a little deaf, for when he called Antonio, he generally did not reply.

Shortly after there arrived an order from Venice, composed in a tolerably peaceful style, addressed to the governor of Bergamo, desiring him to procure and forward information whether in his jurisdiction, and in a certain village, there were not a certain

individual. The governor having performed his duty in such a manner as he believed the authorities intended it should be performed, transmitted a negative reply, which was forwarded to the Ambassador at Milan, who again transmitted it to Don Gonzalo Fernandez di Cordova.

Inquisitive people were not wanting, who desired to know from Bortolo why this young man was no longer there, and whither he was gone. To the first of these questions, Bortolo only replied, "alas! he has disappeared." But afterwards, in order to appease the most troublesome without giving them reason to suspect the truth, he had thought it best to regale them, first one and then another, with those pieces of news which we have already referred to; always, however, as news which was uncertain, which he had himself heard, but of which there was no positive proof.

But when this demand was again made by desire of the Cardinal—without his name, however, being mentioned, and with a certain air of importance and of mystery, which easily shewed that this inquiry was made in the name of some great personage—Bortolo became only all the more uneasy, and thought it necessary to reply in his customary manner; only as a great personage was concerned, he furnished at once all the various pieces of news which he had circulated one by one in various channels.

Let no one, however, imagine that Don Gonzalo, such a high and mighty lord, had really any personal quarrel with this poor mountain silk-weaver; that having heard perhaps of the little respect with which he had treated his name, and of the impolite words addressed

by the poor youth to the Moorish king chained by the throat, he desired to avenge himself; neither let any reader imagine that Don Gonzalo considered Renzo, even as a fugitive, too dangerous a man to be allowed to reside at such a distance, as was the case with the Roman senate and Hannibal. Don Gonzalo had by far too many and too important concerns in his head, to bestow so much thought upon Renzo's affairs; and if it seems that he really did concern himself about our hero, this was occasioned by a singular concurrence of circumstances, through which the poor fellow, without being himself aware of it, either then or ever, found himself connected by a very delicate and invisible thread to these numerous and important concerns.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MORE than once we have had occasion to mention the war which then raged, regarding the succession to the estates of the Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga, the second of that name; but this has always been in great haste, so that we have never been able to give more than a slight intimation of it. Now however, for the proper understanding of our narrative, it is necessary that we should enter more into detail. These are events, which all those who are acquainted with history will be acquainted with; but nevertheless, from a just appreciation of our own merit, we can only suppose that this work will fall into the hands of the ignorant, therefore it will not be amiss if we should here give a smattering of this knowledge to those who may stand in need of it.

We have already said, that at the death of this Duke, the nearest heir, Carlo Gonzaga, head of a younger branch transplanted into France, where he possessed the Duchies of Nivers and Rhetel, had taken possession of Mantua, and we may now add of Monferrat; our precipitation caused us to omit this latter circumstance. The Spanish court desired, at any price, to exclude the new prince from these two fiefs, and being obliged to discover some reason in order to exclude him (for wars commenced without any reason at all would be too unjust), had sided with

those who desired another Gonzaga, Ferrante, Prince of Gustalla, to rule in Mantua; and Carlo Emanuele I. Duke of Savoy, and Margherita Gonzaga, dowager Duchess of Lorraine, to reign in Monferrat. Don Gonzalo, who was of the same family as the great captain whose name he bore, who had already made war in Flanders, and who, being desirous beyond measure to direct a war in Italy, was perhaps the one who most fomented the discord. By interpreting the intentions and exceeding the orders of the minister, he had concluded a treaty of invasion and division of Monferrat; and having easily obtained its ratification by the Count-Duke, persuading him that the acquisition of Casale, which was the best defended point in the portion granted to the King of Spain, was extremely easy; had, nevertheless, protested in the name of his sovereign, that he would occupy this country only as a trust, until the Emperor's decision should be made known. The Emperor, however, partly by the intervention of others, partly influenced by his own private reasons, had meanwhile refused the investiture to the new Duke, and intimated to him that he should leave in sequestration the estates which caused this controversy; and promised that then, having heard both sides of the question, he would bestow them upon the one who had the strongest right. These were conditions to which the Duke of Nivers would not agree.

The Duke had powerful friends; these were the Cardinal Richelieu, the Venetian Senators, and the Pope, who was, as we have already said, Urban VIII. But the Cardinal, entirely absorbed in the siege of Rochelle and in a war with England, and thwarted

by the Queen-mother Maria de Medici, who from certain reasons of her own was opposed to the house of Nivers, could only hold out hope to him. The Venetians would not move, nor even declare themselves, until a French army should have arrived in Italy; and aiding the Duke secretly as well as they could, they merely, with the court of Madrid and the governor of Milan, employed protests, proposals, and exhortations, either pacific or menacing, according as circumstances directed. The Pope recommended the Duke de Nivers to the kindness of his friends,—he interceded for him with his adversaries, and formed projects of accommodation; but he would hear nothing of bringing troops into the field.

Thus the two powers allied for offensive operations, could all the more securely commence their concerted enterprise. The Duke of Savoy had entered that part of Monferrat which had been assigned him; Don Gonzalo had with great good-will laid siege to Casale; but he had not found in it all the satisfaction which he had imagined: let no one believe that in war all is delight. The Court of Spain had not assisted him according to his desires; nay, it even allowed him to stand in need of the most necessary supplies; his ally rendered him only too much assistance; that is, having possessed himself of his own portion, he set about seizing what belonged to the King of Spain. Don Gonzalo was more enraged at this than we can give any idea of; but fearing that if he made the slightest noise, this Carlo Emanuele, as active in intrigue and fickle in his machinations as he was valiant, would join France, he was forced to close an eye, swallow his displeasure, and remain

silent. The siege also went on but badly, was protracted to a great length, and often took a very unfortunate course, either through the resolute, vigilant, and bold conduct of the besiegers, through the smallness of their numbers, or according to some historians, owing to many blunders which Don Gonzalo himself committed. In the midst of these misfortunes, he received the news of the sedition at Milan, and hastened there in person.

There, in the report which was made him, Renzo's flight did not fail to be mentioned; that rebellious flight which had made so much stir, and together with this, the real and supposed circumstances which had caused his arrest; he was also informed that this young man had taken refuge in the territory of Bergamo. This circumstance had fixed the attention of Don Gonzalo. He had been every where informed how much interest the insurrection at Milan had excited in Venice; he had heard how in the beginning they had believed he would be obliged to raise the siege of Casales, and how they still thought he was in great trouble and vexation about it; more especially as, immediately after this event, there arrived intelligence of the raising the siege of Rochelle, intelligence so much desired by the Senators, and so much dreaded by him. And very much nettled, both in his character as man and politician, that these Signors should have such an opinion of him, he watched every occasion by which he could by means of induction persuade them that he had lost none of his old confidence; for merely to say, "I am not afraid," is as good as saying nothing at all. A good means to appear dauntless, is to act dis-

pleasure, to complain, and expostulate. And the Venetian ambassador having presented himself before Don Gonzalo to pay his compliments, and at the same time to read in the great man's countenance and mien what was passing within, Don Gonzalo, after having spoken of the tumult very slightly, and like a man who has already repaired every thing, availed himself of poor Renzo's reception in the Bergamascan territory, to gratify his own private ends, as we have already seen. After this time he no longer occupied himself about an affair so very unimportant, and which, as far as himself was concerned, he considered already terminated: and when a short time afterwards the reply reached him in the camp before Casale, whither he had returned, and where his mind was occupied with quite other thoughts, he raised and shook his head from side to side, like a silkworm which seeks a mulberry leaf; he paused a moment to recall the circumstance, of which there only remained a shadowy remembrance; recalled the affair, had a fugitive and confused idea of the personage, passed on to some other circumstance, and thought no more of the young man. /

But Renzo, who was far from suspecting all this, had for a long time no other thought, or rather we should say, no other study, than to live concealed. We leave you to imagine whether he did not ardently desire to send intelligence of himself to the two women, and to receive news of them—but there were two great difficulties in the way. One was, that he should have been obliged to take a secretary into his confidence, for the poor fellow did not know how to write, nor even to read in the proper sense of the

word. When asked whether he could read, as you may perhaps recollect was once the case when with the Doctor Azzecca-Garbughli, he had replied "yes," but this was no boast; the fact was, he could read what was printed, when he took his time; to read what was written, was something quite different. He would have been, therefore, obliged to take a third person into his confidence, and intrust him with the knowledge of a secret thus important; and in those times it was not so easy to find a man who could use the pen, and who could yet be confided in; and more especially was this the case in a place where he had no old friends. The other difficulty was to find a messenger; a man who should be going precisely to that part of the country, who would take charge of the letter, and who would undertake to deliver it; these were all things very difficult to find united in one man.

At length, having inquired again and again, he found a man who could write for him. But not knowing whether the women were still at Monza, or where they were, he thought it best to inclose the intended letter for Agnese in one directed to Father Cristoforo. The writer of the letter engaged also to despatch it, and, in fact, consigned it into the hands of a man who was to pass not far from Pescarenico; the man left it with many instructions in an hostel on the road, at the nearest point to Pescarenico; the packet, being directed to a convent, arrived there; but it has never been known what became of it. Renzo, seeing that no reply arrived, had another letter written pretty much like the first, and inclosed it in another addressed to a friend and relation of his

at Lecco. Another courier was sought for and found; this time the letter reached the one to whom it was directed. Agnese hastened to Maggianico, and there had it read and explained by this cousin of hers, Alessio; concerted with him a reply, which he put upon paper; and discovered the means by which to send it to Antonio Rivolta at his place of abode: but all this did not take place as speedily as we relate it. Renzo received the reply, and had another letter written. In short, they established between them a correspondence, neither regular nor rapid, but which was nevertheless continued at intervals.

But in order to have an idea of this correspondence it is necessary to know how things went on then, or even how things go on at the present time; for in this particular, I imagine, there will be little or no change.

The peasant who does not know how to write, and who yet stands in need of having something written, applies to some one who understands the art, selecting this one from among those of his own condition, because he is either afraid of, or places little confidence in those above him. He informs his amanuensis, with more or less order and perspicuity, of what has already happened; and explains in the same manner that which he desires to have written. The man of letters understands part, guesses part, gives some advice, proposes some change, and says, "Leave it to me." He takes his pen, translates as well as he can the thoughts of the other into written language, corrects them, improves them, overcharges them, nay, even sometime omits them, as may appear to him the best; for—and there is no remedy for this—a man

who knows more than other people, will not be a mere tool in their hands; and therefore, when he occupies himself with other people's affairs, he desires that they shall be managed a little after his own manner. But spite of this, the writer does not always succeed in saying all that he would like to say; sometimes he happens to say quite the contrary: but this even occurs to us who write for the press. When the letter, thus composed, reaches the hand of the correspondent, who also is but little accustomed to read writing, he carries it to another learned man of the same calibre, who reads and explains it to him. Questions arise regarding the manner of understanding it: for the interested party, founding conjectures upon events that have gone before, maintains that certain words mean one thing; and the learned man, insisting upon the practice which he has in style, maintains that they signify another. At length the one who knows nothing, must place himself in the hands of the one who knows something, and intrusts him with the reply; which, composed in the same manner, will be most likely subjected to a similar interpretation. And should it happen that the subject of the correspondence be somewhat important, does it concern secret affairs, which ought not to be confided to a third person, and therefore through fear of the letter's falling into improper hands be somewhat dubiously expressed, the two parties end by mutually agreeing as well as the scholars who in former times had disputed during four hours, regarding some point of ethics. We do not choose a simile from existing things, for fear we should come in for a heavy chastisement.

Now the situation of our two correspondents was precisely such as we have described. The first letter written in Renzo's name contained a deal of matter. After an account of his flight, much more concise doubtless, but also much worse arranged than the one you have read, there followed a narration of the present state of his circumstances, of which Agnese and her interrogator were far from gaining a clear or perfect idea. He spoke of secret intelligence, of changing his name. He was in safety; but he was obliged to keep himself concealed; things in themselves not over and above familiar to their minds, and which were related in the letter somewhat enigmatically. There were also affectionate and impassioned inquiries regarding Lucia's situation, together with obscure and sorrowful words concerning the reports of her adventures, which had reached even Renzo. Finally, there were distant and uncertain hopes, designs for the future and for the present, promises and prayers to preserve their given faith, not to lose either patience or courage, and to await better times.

Shortly after this, Agnese found a safe opportunity by which to send Renzo a reply, together with the fifty scudi which Lucia had assigned him. At the sight of so much gold, Renzo did not know what to think; and with his soul agitated by astonishment and suspense, which were far from being agreeable, he ran in haste to seek his secretary, to beg him to interpret the letter, and give him the key to this strange mystery.

In the letter, Agnese's secretary, after some complaints about the want of clearness in his former

communication, went on to relate, with about equal clearness, the terrible history of this person—so he designates the Unknown—and here he explains the meaning of the fifty scudi; he then commenced speaking of the vow, and by means of circumlocution counsels Renzo to calm his mind, and not think anything more about Lucia.

Renzo was very near quarreling with his interpreter; he trembled, he became alarmed; he grew enraged both with what he had understood and with what he had not been able to understand. Two or three times he had this terrible epistle read over to him; now he seemed to understand it better, now that became confused which before had appeared clear to him. And in this delirium of passion, he desired the secretary immediately to take the pen in hand and reply. After the strongest expressions which you can imagine of his terror and compassion for Lucia's misfortunes, "Write," he said, "that I do not wish to calm my heart, and that I never will; that this is not advice to be given to a youth such as I; that I will not touch the money; I will keep it, in trust, as a dowry for the young girl; and say that she ought already to be mine; that I will know nothing of this promise, and that I have always heard say the Madonna interests herself in our affairs in order to assist the unhappy, and to plead for them, not to do them evil, and to cause them to break their word; this I have never heard; and say also that this thing cannot be, but that with this money we have enough to commence housekeeping; and that if now our affairs are somewhat perplexed, it is a storm which will pass away." And many other similar things did he say.

Agnese received this letter after some time; she had a reply written, and the correspondence continued in the manner which we have described.

Lucia, when her mother had, I do not know by what means, sent her the intelligence that Renzo was alive, in safety, and informed of what had happened, experienced a great relief, and desired nothing else, except that he should forget her, or rather that he should endeavour to forget her. On her side, a hundred times a day she formed the same resolution with regard to him, and adopted every means by which to accomplish her end. She applied herself very assiduously to her work, and strove entirely to occupy herself with it; when the image of Renzo presented itself to her mind, she sought to banish it by prayer. But this image, as though through sheer malice, did not generally introduce itself openly, but secretly, concealed by other thoughts, so that the mind did not perceive the image until it had already been sometime there. Lucia's thoughts were often with her mother; how could it be otherwise? and the ideal Renzo softly presented himself as third person, as the real one had so many a time done. Thus, with all the persons who had figured in the history of her life, in all places, all memories of the past, this ideal personage introduced himself. And if the poor girl sometimes allowed herself to imagine her future, even there this friend arrived to say, "I, at all events, shall not be there." However, if to think no more of him were a desperate undertaking, she succeeded to a certain degree, and this was to think less about him, and less intensely, than her heart would have dictated: she would have succeeded better, however,

had she been left alone to her work. But there was Donna Pressede, who, on her side, determining to remove him from her soul, found no better expedient than to speak of him very often. "Well," she would say to Lucia, "do you not still think of him?"

"I do not think of any one," Lucia would reply.

Donna Pressede did not content herself with a reply of this kind; she desired deeds and not words, she said; she spoke much upon the usual behaviour of young girls, "who," she said, "when they have once placed in their heart the image of a libertine (and they have all of them this inclination) will never remove it. But if an honest, reasonable connexion with a worthy man is by any accident broken off, they are speedily resigned; but love for a libertine is an incurable wound." And then she began the panegyric of poor Renzo, of this rascal who came to Milan to riot and kill; and she wished to make Lucia confess all the deeds of violence he had committed in his native country.

Lucia, in a voice trembling with shame, grief, and with as much anger as her gentle spirit and humble fortune would permit, assured Donna Pressede, and protested, that in his own country this poor youth had never caused himself to be spoken of except in terms of commendation; she only wished, she said, that some one out of that part of the country were there to bear his testimony to what she said. Even with regard to his adventures in Milan, of which she had no very clear idea, she defended him, by the knowledge which she had of him and his conduct from his very childhood; she defended him, or at least she proposed to defend him from the pure duty

of charity, from love of the truth, or to make use of the exact expression by which she expressed her sentiment, because she was his neighbour. But from this very apology did Donna Pressede deduce fresh arguments to prove to Lucia that her heart was still devoted to this worthless man. And in truth, in these moments it would not be easy to say how affairs stood. The unworthy picture which the old lady drew of the poor youth, awoke as in opposition, more livingly and distinctly in the young girl's mind, the image which had so long found a place there; the memories banished by force, returned in crowds; Donna Pressede's aversion and scorn, recalled so many old reasons for her to esteem and admire him; this blind and violent hatred, excited in Lucia's heart a stronger compassion; and who knows how strong in her heart another sentiment might or might not be, a sentiment which, concealed by other feelings, so easily introduces itself into the soul. However this might be, on Lucia's side the conversation could never be much prolonged, without the words speedily ending in tears.

If Donna Pressede had been actuated to this treatment by inveterate hatred towards Lucia, perhaps these tears might have touched and silenced the good lady, but her words being directed towards a good object, she pursued her discourse without allowing herself to be moved; groans and cries of supplication may avert the sword of an enemy, but not the steel of the surgeon. After having well performed her duty for this time, from reproaches she passed on to exhortations and advice, mingling them with some praise, so as to temper the sour with something sweet, and

thus better obtain her end, by operating on the soul in all possible ways. Assuredly these disputes (which had always pretty nearly the same commencement and termination), left in our good Lucia's heart no feeling of bitterness towards her severe lecturer, who in other things treated her with great gentleness; and even in these sermons, a good intention might be perceived. There remained, however, such an awakening of disquiet thoughts and love, that it required much time and much exertion to recall that calmness which she had before enjoyed.

It was fortunate for her that she was not the only one whom Donna Pressede desired to benefit. Beside the other domestics, who were all of them, according to her, souls which required more or less to be corrected and guided; besides all the other occasions she had of fulfilling the same duty from pure goodwill towards many people who had not the slightest claim upon her, occasions which she went in search of, did they not present themselves; she had five daughters, not one of whom was in her house, but who, nevertheless, on this very account, gave her more to think of than if they had been. Three were nuns, two were married; and thus Donna Pressede naturally found she had three convents and two houses to superintend: a vast and difficult undertaking, all the more laborious, as two husbands supported by fathers, mothers, and brothers, and three lady-abbesses, encouraged by many dignitaries and nuns, would not accept of her superintendence. It was a war, or rather five wars, disguised, polite, to a certain point, but active, and without any cessation of arms: there was in all these places, a constant attention to avoid

her eagerness, to close every ear to her advice, to elude her inquiries, and an endeavour as much as possible to transact all affairs in secret. I will not speak of the opposition, of the difficulties she met with in the management of other affairs, which concerned her even less than those we have spoken of; it is well known that generally men must be benefited against their own will. It was in her own house that her zeal could most freely exercise itself: there every one was subject to her authority, with the exception of Don Ferrante, and with him things went on in a peculiar manner.

Being a studious man, he did not like either to command or to obey. In all household matters, his lady wife might be mistress, certainly; but make him her slave,—no, that was another matter. And if, when besought, he, upon a certain occasion officiated as her secretary, it was because in such employments he considered his genius lay,—nay, he even could refuse her such a favour, if he were not persuaded of the propriety of what she desired him to write: “try yourself,” he would say to her, “do it yourself then, if the thing seems so clear to you.” Donna Pressede, having endeavoured in vain to lead him to do as she desired, was not unfrequently reduced to grumble against him, and call him an original, a man obstinately attached to his own ideas, a learned man; a title, which, together with some anger, she never pronounced without a certain degree of pleasure.

Don Ferrante passed a deal of time in his study, where he had a considerable collection of books; a collection consisting of little less than three hundred volumes; these were all selected works, works of the

highest reputation in various branches, in every one of which he was more or less versed. In astrology, he considered himself, and with reason, as more than a mere *dilettante*; for he was not only possessed of the general notions, and of the common vocabulary of influences, aspects, and conjunctions, but he knew how to speak upon proper occasions, like any professor, of the twelve houses of the heavens, of the great circles, of the lucid and obscure degrees, of exaltations and dejections, of passages and revolutions, of those principles, in short, the most certain and recondite of the science. And during perhaps twenty years he had, in frequent and long disputes, maintained the pre-eminence of Cardan, against another learned man, who was warmly attached to the system of Alcabizio, and this out of pure obstinacy, as Don Ferrante said. He willingly recognised the superiority of the ancients, but could not, however, endure that prejudice which will not grant to the moderns, even that merit which they evidently deserve. He had more than an ordinary knowledge of the history of the science; he was able; if need were, to cite the most celebrated predictions which had been verified, and to reason subtilely and learnedly on other celebrated predictions which had failed of verification; and could demonstrate that the fault did not lie in the science itself, but in those who had not known how to apply it.

He had acquired as much knowledge of ancient philosophy as would have sufficed for an ordinary learned man, but he continued to increase it by the reading of Diogenes Laertius. Yet, however beautiful various systems may be, it is impossible to adopt them all; and wishing to be a philosopher, it is necessary

to select some one or other in particular; therefore Don Ferrante had selected Aristotle, who, as he was accustomed to say, was neither ancient nor modern. He possessed also divers works written by the most wise and subtile followers of Aristotle among the moderns; those of his opponents he never would read; in order not to throw away his time, as he said; nor buy them either, lest he should throw away his money. He alone, and by way of exception, assigned a place in his library to the celebrated two-and-twenty volumes—*De subtilitate*, and to a few other anti-peripatetic works by Cardan, in consideration of his worth as an astrologer; saying that whoever could have written the treatise *De restitutione temporum et motuum cælestium*, and the work *Duodecim Geniturarum*, deserved a hearing, even although he should be mistaken; and that the great fault of this man, was his having had too much genius; and that no one could imagine what eminence he might not have attained, even in philosophy, had he always kept in the straight path. Although, in the opinion of the learned, Don Ferrante passed for an accomplished peripatetic, however, in his own eyes, he did not appear to consider himself so; and more than once, he said with great modesty, that the essence, the universals, the soul of the world, and the nature of things, were not so clear as might be believed.

Natural philosophy he had made more a pastime than a study; even the works of Aristotle upon this subject, and of Pliny himself, he might be sooner said to have read than studied; nevertheless, with this reading, with the information gathered incidentally from treatises upon general philosophy, and from

hastily glancing over the *Magia naturale* of Porta, the three histories, *Lapidum*, *Animalium*, *Plantarum* of Cardan, and the treatise upon herbs, plants, and animals of Albertus Magnus, with several other works of less account, he was able upon occasion to entertain an assembly of well-instructed people by reasoning upon the most admirable virtues, and curious singularities of many plants; describing exactly the forms and habits of the Sirens, and of the unique Phoenix; explaining how the Salamander could exist in the fire without being consumed; how the Remora, that little fish, should have the strength and power in the open sea suddenly to retard the progress of the largest vessel; how the dewdrops become pearls in the shells; how the camelion feeds upon air; how ice, slowly hardened by the lapse of ages, becomes crystal; and, in short, could explain a thousand other marvellous secrets of nature.

He had applied himself still more to the study of magic and sorcery, for, says our Anonymous, this was a science much more in vogue, and much more necessary; the facts of which were of a much greater importance, and much more easily verified. It is not needful to say that in such a study he had never had any other desire than that of instructing himself, and of gaining an accurate knowledge of the worst arts of sorcery, in order by this means to preserve and defend himself from them. And guided by the great Martino Delrio, a scientific man, he was able to discourse *ex professo* upon the witchcraft of love, upon the witchcraft of sleep, upon the witchcraft of hatred, and upon the innumerable species of these three principal kinds of witchcraft, of which, alas! remarks

the Anonymous, one only sees too much at the present day. Equally vast and profound was his knowledge of history, particularly of universal history. His authors were, Tarcagnola, Dolce, Bugatti, Campana, Guazzo, the most famous, in short.

“But,” Don Ferrante would often say, “what is history without politics? It is a guide who goes on and on without any one following him, without any to whom he can direct the way, and who consequently throws away his time; and politics without history resemble a man who travels on without a guide.” Therefore was a small space in his shelves assigned to statistics; where among works of secondary fame shone forth Bodino, Cavalcanti, Sansovino, Paruta, and Boccalini. There were, however, two books which Don Ferrante preferred to all others on this subject, two books which for a long time he considered as the first of their kind, without ever being able to decide to which of the two alone belonged the rank of pre-eminence; the *Il Principe* and the *Discorsi* of the celebrated secretary of Florence; “A rascal it is true,” said Don Ferrante, “but a profound thinker.” The other work was *La Ragion di Stato*, by the no less celebrated Giovanni Botero; “an honest man,” he would say, but “a cunning one.” However, a short time before the period to which our history is circumscribed, there appeared a book which had terminated the question of priority, taking its stand far above the works of the two great men we have just named, a book in which were to be found comprised and condensed all vices, in order that men might learn to avoid them; and all virtues, that they might practise them; a very small work,

but all of gold; in one word, *Lo Statista Regnante* of Don Valeriano Castiglione, whom the most learned men of his time emulated each other in distinguishing, and for whose notice the greatest personages disputed; whom the Pope Urban VIII. honoured by magnificent praises; whom the Cardinal Borghese and the Viceroy of Naples, Don Pietro di Toledo, solicited to write—the first, the deeds of Pope Paul V., the latter an account of the wars of her Catholic Majesty in Italy, but both one and the other in vain; this man, whom Louis XIII., at the suggestion of Cardinal Richelieu named his historiographer; upon whom the Duke Carlo Emanuel of Savoy conferred the same office; and in praise of whom the Duchess Ghristina, daughter of the very Christian King, Henry IV., added in a diploma, after many other titles, “the certitude of that renown which he had obtained in Italy as the first writer of the age.”

But if in all the abovenamed sciences, Don Ferrante might be considered well informed, there was one in which he merited and enjoyed the title of professor; this was the science of chivalry. He not only spoke about it with the air of a master, but was often requested to interfere in some affair of honour, and always gave his decision. He had in his library, and one might say in his head, the works of all the most celebrated authors who had written upon this subject: Paride dal Pozzo, Fausto da Longiano, Urrea, Muzio, Romei, Albergato, and all Torquato Tasso, whom he had always ready; and out of whose “Jerusalem Delivered,” as well as his “Jerusalem Conquered,” he could repeat from memory, when needed, all those passages which related to matters of chivalry. How-

ever, in his opinion, the greatest authors among them all was the celebrated Francesco Birago, in connexion with whom he had found himself more than once engaged in passing judgment upon some affair of honour; and who also, on his side, spoke of Don Ferrante in terms of peculiar esteem. And even before the *Discorsi Cavallereschi* of this renowned author had appeared, Don Ferrante had prophesied, without hesitation, that this work would ruin the authority of Olevano, and would remain, together with its noble sisters, a code for posterity of the very highest authority; a prophecy which has verified itself, as every one may see, remarks our Anonymous.

Our author does not content himself with these hasty particulars, but is remarkably communicative regarding this learned man; for ourselves, however, we are too much in haste to resume the thread of our story to permit ourselves longer to dwell upon this topic.

Until the autumn of the following year, 1629, the principal personages of our history remained pretty nearly as we left them, without anything worthy of relation occurring to either one or other of them. This autumn, in which Agnese and Lucia had agreed to meet, at length arrived; but a great public calamity destroyed their project; and this certainly was one of its very least effects: other events followed, which, however, wrought no remarkable change in the fate of our *dramatis personæ*. At length fresh calamities, more general, more serious, more extreme, reached even them; even those who in the scale of the world were even lower than they. These calamities came upon them like a violent tempestuous whirlwind,

which tearing up trees, overthrowing walls and houses, scattering their remains over the earth, carries away even the straws concealed in the grass, and collects from out of corners the dry and light leaves which a more gentle wind had driven there, carrying them on with the rest of its mighty prey.

In order, however, that the private events which yet remain for us to relate should be clear, it is absolutely necessary that we relate, as well as we can, something regarding these public events, commencing at a somewhat earlier period.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AFTER the famous sedition of San Martino and the following days, it really seemed as though by a miracle, abundance had returned to Milan. There was bread in great quantities in all the shops; the price was the same as in the most fruitful years; there was grain in the same proportion. Those, who during these two terrible days had yelled in the streets, and even done worse, had now—excepting those few who had been arrested—something to congratulate themselves upon. But do not suppose that, the first alarm of seizure being over, they remained quiet. In the public squares, at the corners of the streets, in the taverns, there was a shew of dancing, a congratulating each other, and a boasting, in under tones, that they had at last discovered the way of reducing the price of bread. In the midst, however, of all this festivity and merriment, there was—and how should it have been otherwise?—a certain uneasiness, a certain presentiment that this abundance could not last. The people besieged the bakers' shops just as they had done before in the artificial and short-lived abundance produced by Antonio Ferrer's first tariff—the flour and bread were consumed without the slightest economy; whoever had a few pence laid by now, invested them in bread and flour; boxes, small casks, nay, even cauldrons, were turned into magazines. Thus

striving against each other to enjoy the present abundance, they rendered—I do not say its long duration impossible, for impossible it already was, but caused its temporary continuation to be still more difficult.

Therefore, on the 15th of November, Antonio Ferrer, by order of his Excellency, published a decree, by which it was forbidden to any one who should have any quantity of grain or flour in his house to purchase any more; and to any one to buy bread more than sufficient for two days, under penalty of both pecuniary and corporal punishment, according to the will of his Excellency. This decree intimated to the officers of justice, and in fact to every one, that they should denounce the transgressors; ordered the judges to institute search in all those houses which should be indicated to them; and at the same time commanded that the shops should be well provided with bread, under pain of five years in the galleys, and even greater punishment, according to the will of his Excellency. Whoever imagines a proclamation such as the present put into execution, must have a very powerful imagination; and certainly had all these orders been executed, the duchy of Milan would have had as many men on the sea as Great Britain has at the present day.

But, commanding the bakers to make so much bread, care should have been taken that the materials out of which to make it, should not have failed them. In times of famine, people study how to make bread out of productions which ordinarily are consumed under other forms. It was therefore now imagined that rice might enter into the composition of the bread

called *di mistura* (mixture). On the 23d of November was issued a decree, which placed at the disposal of the Vicar, and twelve members of provision, the half of the raw rice which each one possessed; any one disposing of this without the permission of these gentlemen, to be liable to lose the whole of his rice, and be fined three scudi the bushel: this was, as every one perceives, the most reasonable of all the orders.

But it was necessary to pay for this rice, and that at a price very disproportionate to that of bread. The charge of supplying this enormous difference had been imposed upon the city; but the Council of Ten deliberated that same day, the 23d of November, upon representing to the Governor, the utter impossibility of their longer sustaining such a burden. And the Governor, by the proclamation of the 7th of December, fixed the price of rice of this kind at twelve lire the bushel; whoever shall demand a higher sum than the fixed price, or refuse to sell, is threatened with the loss of the whole of his rice, and with a fine equal to its value, and still greater punishment, both pecuniary and corporal, even the galleys, according to the will of his Excellency, as the degree of the offence, and as the person shall admit.

The price of superior rice had already been fixed, even before the first of these popular commotions; probably the tariff, or to make use of a word of much celebrity in modern annals, the maximum of corn and the other ordinary kinds of grain had been settled in other decrees, which we have not happened to meet with.

Now, therefore, corn and flour being by these means kept at a low price at Milan, there rushed

thither crowds of famished people from the country. Don Gonzalo, in order to remedy this inconvenience as he calls it, prohibited by another edict of the 15th of December, any one carrying out of the city, bread to above the amount of twenty soldi (pence), under pain of losing this same bread and twenty-five scudi, and in case of inability, of undergoing a public flogging; and even still greater punishment, according, etc., etc. The 22d of the same month (and one does not see well wherefore this should not have been attended to sooner) he published a similar order regarding flour and grain.

The multitude had desired to cause abundance by pillage and conflagration; the Governor now desired to maintain it by the galleys and the cord. The means were tolerably well matched; the reader may judge whether they would attain their end; what end they did attain, he shall see directly. It is easy, and not useless, to observe how between these strange means there exists an intimate and necessary connexion; each was the inevitable consequence of the preceding; and all, in fact, flowed from the first, which had fixed upon bread a price so disproportionate to that which ought to have resulted from the real state of things. An expedient such as this has always appeared to the multitude, not only just, but very simple, and very easy to put in execution: it is then very natural that enduring the miseries of famine, they should desire, implore, and even impose it. But gradually, as the consequences make themselves felt, it behoves those whose business it is, to repair them, by a law which shall prohibit men from doing that which they had been instigated to do by former

proclamations. May we be permitted here hastily to observe a singular combination of circumstances. In a country, and in an epoch, not very distant from us, in the most renowned and important epoch of modern history, they had recourse in similar circumstances to similar measures; they were almost the same in substance, only a little different in their proportion, and the events followed pretty nearly in the same order. They adopted these measures, in spite of the great changes that had come over society, of the general increase of knowledge in Europe, and more especially in this very country; and this principally, because the great mass of the people who had not yet become enlightened, was able in the long run to make its judgments prevail, and to control the hand of those who formed the laws.

But let us return to our narrative. Hear what had been the fruits of all this strife:—they had spoiled and utterly lost a quantity of food in the tumult itself; they had consumed, as long as the tariff was in operation, largely and without measure, even at the expense of the small quantity of grain which was to last them until the approaching harvest. To these general effects must be reckoned four unfortunate men who were hanged as ringleaders of the mob: two before the bakehouse of the Crutches, two at the end of the street where stood the house of the Superintendent of provisions.

The historical relations of these times are written so carelessly that we are not able to discover when and how this violent tariff ceased. If, however, in the absence of positive proof, it be permitted us to advance a conjecture, it was, we are inclined to think,

suppressed a little earlier or a little later than the 24th of December, which was the day of this execution. As to the edicts, after the one of the 22d of the same month, which we have quoted, we find no other relating to food; but whether they have perished, or have escaped our research, or whether the Governor, at length discouraged by the inefficacy of his remedies, and overwhelmed by the torrent of public calamity, abandoned things to their own course, we know not. But we find in the relations of more than one historian (inclined as they all are, sooner to describe great events than to note their causes and progress), a description of the country, and particularly of the city, during the advanced winter and in the spring. All the shops were closed, the manufactories were for the most part deserted; the streets presented an indescribable spectacle, there was one constant stream of miserable objects through them; they were the perpetual abode of sufferers. The mendicants by profession, now the smallest portion, were confounded and lost among a new multitude of unfortunates, and these poor wretches were seen disputing for alms with those very beggars who had formerly received assistance from them. Clerks and journeymen who, dismissed by the merchants and shopkeepers, were deprived of their daily earnings, and who could scarcely exist upon their scanty savings; masters themselves, who through the cessation of trade, had become utterly ruined; and workmen, and possessors of every manufacture and every art, from the humblest to the most refined, from the most necessary to those of the highest luxury, now wandered from door to door, from street to street, leaned against

the corners of the streets, laid themselves down upon the stones, upon the steps of houses and churches, piteously beseeching alms, or hesitating between necessity and shame, not yet overcome; thin and feeble, they had scarcely strength to support themselves, exhausted as they were by a long fast, and by the cold which penetrated their worn garments, in which might yet be perceived traces of a better state. Mingled in this miserable troop, and forming no small portion of it, were domestics, dismissed by their masters, who however wealthy, found themselves unable in such a season to maintain their usual number of attendants; and to all these various miserable objects associated themselves a number of others, accustomed in part to live upon their gains—children, women, old people, grouped around their ancient supporters, or dispersed in various places, beseeching alms.

There was also, and these might be distinguished by their tangled locks, their ragged finery, and by a certain indescribable air in their bearing and gestures, and by the traces of their habits stamped upon their countenances, many of the Bravo class, who through the general misery had lost their wickedly gained bread, and were forced to crave it now as charity. Tamed by hunger, now only disputing with others in prayers and petitions, they dragged themselves along the very streets which they had so often traversed with haughty steps, with a proud and ferocious air, clothed in rich and gay liveries, with waving plumes, decorated with rich arms, elegant, perfumed; but now they humbly held forth that hand which they had so often raised insolently to threaten, or treacherously to kill.

But perhaps the most disgusting, and yet at the same time the most piteous spectacle, were the country people, alone, or in companies of whole families together; husbands, and wives with their children in their arms, or fastened upon their backs, with elder children by the hand, with old people beside them. Some whose houses had been invaded and pillaged by the soldiery when quartered with them, or on their march, had fled in despair; and among these were those who, to excite more compassion and to distinguish their misery among so much, exhibited the bruises and wounds which they had received whilst defending the few last remains of their provisions, or when escaping from a blind and foolish licentiousness. Others, whom this particular scourge had not yet reached, but driven by two other scourges from which no part of the land had been exempt, sterility and the high price of food, had come, and were still hastening to the city as the last asylum of abundance and pious munificence. It was easier to distinguish the newly arrived by their air of astonishment and rage at discovering such a superabundance of misery where they had alone expected to be objects of compassion, than even by their uncertain and strange manner. In the features of the others, who for a longer space of time had traversed and inhabited the city streets, prolonging their miserable existence by the succour which they so sparingly received, was deposited a deeper consternation. Different were the costumes of those who might still be said to be clothed, and different also were their countenances. There were seen the pale visages of the dwellers in the marshes, the bronzed faces of the inhabitants of

the higher lands and of the hills, and the ruddy complexion of the mountaineers; but all were alike sharp and distorted; all had the same hollow eye, the same fixed stare, half ferocious, half idiotic; all tangled hair, long and rough beards; bodies inured to labour, but now bowed by pain and poverty; and through their tattered garments might be seen how the wrinkled skin hung upon their dry arms, legs, and thin chests. Different to the spectacle of this reduced vigour and masculine power, but not less painful, was the langour and utter debility of those who were of a weaker sex and age.

Here and there in the streets, and along the walls, were to be seen heaps of straw and stubble mingled with filthy rags. These, disgusting as they might appear, were however charitable donations; they were couches prepared for these poor wretches, where at night they could repose their weary limbs. Often, during the day, were these couches occupied by those who, exhausted by suffering and fasting, could no longer drag themselves along. Sometimes a corpse would lie extended upon one of these miserable beds. Sometimes a body would be seen suddenly to fall flat upon the pavement, and there remain a corpse.

Bending over these dead or dying, might sometimes be seen a passer-by, or a neighbour, attracted thither by an impulse of compassion. Again, there would arrive succour, administered by a hand, rich in means, and accustomed to confer princely benefits—the hand of the good Federigo. He had chosen six priests, endowed with lively charity, perseverance, and robust constitutions; these he had divided into pairs, and to each pair had assigned a third of the city as their

charge; these priests were followed by attendants, who brought with them food, the most efficacious restoratives, and clothing. Every morning, these three pairs set forth on their mission by various routes, approached those they saw lying abandoned on the earth, and bestowed their attention wherever it was required. One, who already in his last agony was no longer in a condition to receive food, received from them the last consolation of religion. To the hungry they distributed broth, bread, and wine; and to the others, exhausted by a longer fast, they administered jellies, soup, and more generous wine; restoring them at first, when needful, with spirits. At the same time they distributed articles of clothing.

Neither did their assistance end here. The good pastor desired, wherever this were possible, that the poor sufferers should receive permanent, and not mere momentary relief; therefore, the good priests gave a little money to those whose strength had been sufficiently restored for them to pursue their way, fearing lest want and hunger should again speedily reduce them to their former misery; for the others he sought an asylum in some neighbouring house. In the houses of the wealthy, they were for the most part charitably received as protégés of the Cardinal: in those where the means were wanting to the good will, the priests requested that the poor creatures should be taken in as boarders, arranged the price, and paid a certain sum in advance. They gave information of this to the different curates, in order that they might visit them, and returned themselves at a certain time.

Federigo had not waited until the misery had attained its height, in order to have his compassion

excited, and then exercise his benevolence. \ By uniting all his means, by rendering his system of economy still more strict, by drawing upon sums destined for other liberalities, which now had become of secondary importance; he had endeavoured in every possible way to amass money to be employed in succouring this famished people. He had made great purchases of grain, a considerable portion of which he sent to those places of the diocese where corn was the most scarce. And as this supply was very inferior to the demand, he sent also a quantity of salt, "with which," says Ripamonti,* relating the circumstance, "the grass of the field, and the bark of trees was turned into food." He had distributed grain and money among the various curates of the city; he himself visited the various quarters, and bestowed alms; he succoured in secret many poor families; and in the episcopal palace, we are informed by a contemporary writer (the physician Alessandro Tadino, in one of his reports, which we shall have frequent occasion to quote), were dealt out to the people two thousand measures of boiled rice every morning.

The void which mortality created each day in this deplorable multitude, was each day more than replenished; there was a perpetual concourse, at first from the neighbouring villages, then from more distant parts of the country, from the various Milanese towns, and at length, even from other states. From Milan itself departed many of the old inhabitants: some to remove themselves from the sight of so much misery; others, seeing their place usurped by foreign intruders, went forth with a last desperate

* *Historiæ Patriæ*, Decad. v. lib. vi. p. 386. (*Note of the Author*).

attempt to find succour elsewhere, in some place where at least, either the crowd should be less dense, or the clamour of demands less great. These two bodies of pilgrims met on the same road—a spectacle of terror to each other, a fearful warning, a dark omen of the fate towards which both were hastening! But each pilgrimage pursued its way, if not with the hope of improving its condition, at least to avoid returning again to those places where famine and despair had first seized them. Sometimes a miserable fugitive, entirely deprived of all strength, would fall down on the road, and remain there a corpse; an ominous spectacle to his companions in misery, an object of horror, perhaps of reproach to the other passers-by. “I saw,” writes Ripamonti, “lying on the road which encircles the walls, the body of a woman. From her mouth issued the remains of half-chewed grass, and her lips were still curved with an expression of frenzy. She had in her lap a small bundle of sticks, and bound in its swaddling clothes, on her bosom, lay a little infant, which was wailing bitterly.”

The striking contrast of magnificent dresses and of rags, of luxury and misery, which is an ordinary spectacle in ordinary times, had then entirely ceased. Rags and misery had intruded almost everywhere, and the only sign of distinction was scarcely an appearance of humble mediocrity. Even the nobles were seen in the streets in simple, almost mean garments: some either because the public calamity had thus affected their fortunes, or reduced their patrimonies, already embarrassed; others, because they either feared to provoke by their pomp the public despair, or dreaded to insult the public misery. Those

oppressors who were accustomed to parade the streets with a train of bravoës, now pursued their way almost unattended, with bowed heads, and countenances which seemed to offer and beseech peace. Others, who in prosperity had been filled with more humane thoughts, and appeared with a more modest bearing, seemed also confounded and overwhelmed at the continued sight of a misery which exceeded all possibility of relief. But whoever was possessed with the desire to bestow an alms had a difficult and melancholy task in selecting the object for his charity. Scarcely was a beneficent hand seen to approach the hand of one of these sufferers, than there arose a terrible contention among the surrounding miserable beings: those who still retained vigour sufficient, pressed forward more urgently to beseech attention; the exhausted old people and children raised their thin hands; mothers held up their crying infants who were ill, inclosed in their miserable ragged swaddling clothes, and who from very languor, bent forward in their mothers' hands.

Thus passed the winter and the spring: and already for a long time had the Tribunal of Health represented to the Tribunal of Provisions the danger in which the city ran of contagion, through so much misery being dispersed in every quarter; and had proposed that the mendicants should be shut up in various hospitals. Whilst they discussed this project, whilst they approved it, whilst they considered the means of putting it into execution, the number of dead bodies continued every day to increase in the streets, and in proportion, the amount of misery also. The Tribunal of Provisions then proposed another simpler

and much more expeditious method: and this was to inclose all the mendicants, healthy and sick, in one place, in the Lazaretto, and there support them at the public expense. This was resolved upon in spite of the Tribunal of Health, which objected that in such a great assemblage of people, the very danger which they desired to avoid would be only augmented.

The Lazaretto of Milan is a four-sided, almost square enclosure, without the city, on the left hand of the eastern gate, and separated from the city walls by the moat, a circumvallation and a ditch, which surrounds the inclosure itself. The two principal sides are about five hundred feet long, the two others about fifty feet shorter. The exterior has been divided into a series of small rooms one story in height; within, above three stories of similar chambers runs a piazza, supported by slender columns. Formerly there were two hundred and eighty-eight of these chambers, and even more; at the present day, a large entrance opened in the middle, and a smaller one in a corner of the wall which faces the high road, have destroyed a considerable number. In the centre of the inner space there was, and still exists, a small octangular church.

This building, commenced in the year 1489, at the expense of a private individual, and afterwards carried on by public subscription, and by other donations and bequests, was, as its name announces, destined for the reception of people seized with the plague. At the moment of which we speak, the lazaretto only served as a place of deposit for merchandise, which had to be subjected to the laws of quarantine. Speedily to clear this building, the various prescribed

regulations of the sanatory law were hastily attended to, and the merchandise at once released. Straw was spread in all the chambers, and provisions were laid in of such quality, and in such quantity, as could be procured; and by a public edict all mendicants were invited to betake themselves there.

Many hastened there voluntarily; all those who lay sick in the streets were carried thither; and within a few days there were assembled in all, upwards of three thousand. But there were many who still remained without the walls of the lazaretto. Whether it was that each one waited, hoping to see the others move off, and thus leave him to enjoy the charity of the city all to himself; whether it was the natural repugnance of man to being imprisoned within stone walls, or that mistrust felt by the poor towards every regulation proposed by the rich and powerful; whether it was a knowledge of what was in reality the benefit offered, or whether it was all these reasons together, or something else that influenced them, the fact remains, that the greater portion of the populace paying no attention to this invitation, continued to drag themselves painfully along the streets. Perceiving this, the law-makers thought well to adopt force. They despatched constables who should drive the beggars to the lazaretto, and carry them thither bound, did they make any resistance; a premium of ten soldi was assigned to the constables for each mendicant thus carried away; and worthy is it of remark, that even in the greatest times of distress, enough money belonging to the public is always found to be employed in some folly or other. And although a certain number of these wretched people

banished themselves from their native city, as though at the express desire of the Tribunal of Provisions, in order at least to live or die in freedom; yet so successful was the chase, that in a short time the number within the lazaretto, both of guests and prisoners, amounted to about twelve thousand.

It is to be supposed, although the memoirs of the time make no mention of the fact, that the women and children were placed in a separate quarter. Rules and regulations for good order would certainly not be wanting; but let any one imagine what order could be maintained, more especially in those times and in these circumstances, in such a vast assemblage, where, together with voluntary guests, were prisoners carried thither by force and stratagem; people, for whom begging was a grief, a shame, brought in contact with others with whom it was a trade; where men, grown up in the honest activity of camps and offices, mingled with those educated in the streets, in taverns, in the palaces of oppressors, where they had learned to idle, to cheat, to mock, and commit violence.

It would not be difficult to form a melancholy conjecture regarding the mingling of these uncongenial elements, even did we possess no positive intelligence—but this we do possess. They slept heaped up twenty or thirty in each of these small cells, or else lay stretched under the piazza upon a little putrid straw, or on the earth: certainly, orders had been issued that the straw should be fresh, that there should be sufficient of it, and that it should be often changed; but in truth, there was but a miserable supply, what there was, was bad, and it was never

changed! It had been likewise ordered that the bread should be fresh; for what administrator ever said that bad articles should be distributed? But how was it possible that bread, which could not have been obtained under ordinary circumstances, even in a much less supply, could now be procured for such an immense multitude? It was said, we find by the memoirs of the times, that the lazaretto bread was adulterated with heavy, but not nutritious substances; and it is only too probable that this was the fact. Pure water was very scarce, I would say running and wholesome water; the only well was the ditch which surrounded the enclosure, where the water was muddy and stagnant, and rendered vile by the constant use and neighbourhood of such an immense and wretched multitude.

To these causes of mortality, all the more active because operating upon bodies already exhausted or enfeebled, was added the unfavourableness of the season; obstinate rains were followed by a more obstinate drought, and by unseasonable and violent heat. These physical evils were increased by mental suffering, the weariness and despair of captivity—the remembrance of former habits of life—grief for the beloved dead—the disquieting memory of the absent beloved ones—and a number of other tormenting and exhausting passions; and then the very apprehension and constant spectacle of death occasioned by so many causes, became in itself a powerful cause of disease. Therefore it is not to be wondered at that the mortality should have increased in this building to such a degree as to assume the appearance, and be considered by many, as the plague. Whether this was

simply an epidemic sickness, augmented by all their sufferings, or whether there really was a species of contagion afloat, which easily seized upon bodies already rendered liable to its attacks by poverty, suffering and filth; or whether the plague first broke out in the lazaretto itself, as appears from an obscure and imperfect relation of the time, to have been the opinion of the physicians of the Tribunal of Health, we cannot now decide. At all events the number of deaths in the lazaretto soon exceeded a hundred a day.

Whilst in this fearful prison there reigned langour, agony, terror, lamentation; in the Tribunal of Provision, shame, astonishment, and uncertainty, had seized upon all minds. They consulted, they listened to the advice of the Tribunal of Health, and now nothing was to be done but destroy all that work which had been prepared with such ceremony, with such expectation, and with so much vexation. The lazaretto was opened; all the mendicants who still remained in health were dismissed, and rushed forth with a mad joy. The city again resounded with lamentations, but more weak and interrupted. Those who fell sick were transported to Santa Maria della Stella, which was then the hospital for the poor, and there the greater number perished.

In the meantime, however, the fields began to grow golden with the ripening crops. The peasants departed from the city, each one returning his own way towards this long sighed after harvest. The good Federigo in dismissing them, bestowed upon them another proof of his love; to every peasant who presented himself at the episcopal palace, he ordered to be given a guilio and a sickle.

With the harvest the famine ceased to be felt; but the mortality, increasing day by day, continued until the middle of autumn. It was, however, on the point of ceasing, when a new scourge desolated the country.

Many events of high historical interest had occurred within this interval. The Cardinal Richelieu having taken Rochelle, as we have already informed our readers, had formed a treaty of peace with England; had proposed and obtained, by his powerful influence in the council of the King of France, efficacious succour for the Duke di Nevers; and at the same time had induced the king to conduct this expedition. Whilst these preparations were proceeding, the Count of Nassau, the imperial commissary, intimated in Mantua, to the new duke, that he should place the states in the hands of Ferdinand; otherwise, in case of refusal, the emperor would dispatch an army to occupy them. The duke, who in the most desperate circumstances had rejected such a hard condition, and now encouraged by the approaching succour from France, defended himself still more boldly. The commissary departed, protesting that force should decide the affair. In March, the Cardinal Richelieu, together with the king at the head of an army, demanded a free passage from the Duke of Savoy; they entered into treaties, but nothing was concluded. After a rencounter, in which the French obtained the advantage, they again formed a treaty, in which, among other things, it was stipulated that Don Gonzalo de Cordova should raise the siege of Casale; engaging himself, should the French be the conquerors, to join them for the invasion of the Duchy of Milan. Don Gonzalo raised the siege of Casale, and a body of French troops entered it to reinforce the garrison.

It was upon this occasion that Achillini addressed King Louis in his famous sonnet.

Sudate o fochi a preparar metalli; and another, in which he exhorts him to go and deliver the Holy Land. But it is a species of fate that the advice of poets is never listened to; and if in history you discover some few deeds performed according to their suggestions, you may depend upon it, that these deeds have been resolved upon long before. The Cardinal de Richelieu had, on the contrary, resolved to return to France, on account of certain affairs which appeared to him more urgent. It was in vain that Girolamo Soranzo, the Venetian envoy, employed the most powerful arguments to combat this resolution; the King and the Cardinal paid as little attention to his prose as they had done to the verses of Achillini; he returned with the greater part of the army, only leaving six thousand men behind in Suza, to occupy the pass and maintain the treaty.

Whilst this army moved off on one side, that of the Emperor advanced from the other; he had invaded the country of the Grisons and the Valtellina; and now he was preparing to descend into the Milanese. Besides all the distress and annoyance which might be expected from such a march, express intelligence had been received by the Tribunal of Health, that the plague lurked in this army. There were always some sprinklings of it among the German troops, remarks Varchi, when speaking of the plague brought by the Germans to Florence a century before. Alesandro Tadino, one of the guardians of the public (there were six of them besides the president; magistrates and two physicians), was com-

missioned by the Tribunal, as he himself relates in the report already cited,* to represent to the government the frightful danger which threatened the country, did this army pass through the Milanese on its way to besiege Mantua, as was the universal report. All the actions of Don Gonzalo shew that he was possessed by a great desire to occupy an important place in history, and certainly history could not pass him over in silence; but, as often happens, she has failed to register one of his actions, the most worthy of memory, his reply to the request of Tadino, which was, "that he did not know what to do; that the motives of interest and honour which occasioned the march of this army were of greater weight than the danger represented; that he should endeavour to arrange all for the best, and trust in Providence."

In order, therefore, to arrange all for the best, the two physicians of the Tribunal, the above-named Tadino, and the Senator Settala, son of the celebrated Lodovico, proposed that all people should be prohibited under the severest penalties from buying any manner of article from the soldiers as they passed through; but it was not possible to make the necessity of such an order evident to the President, "a man of great kindness," says Tadino, "who could not believe that from intercourse with these soldiers, and the sale of their property, the deaths of so many millions should result."

As for Don Gonzalo, he quitted Milan shortly after his reply to Tadino, and this departure was as grievous

* Ragguaglio dell' origine e giornali successi della gran peste contagiosa venefica e malefica, seguita nella città di Milano, etc. — *Milano*, 1648, p. 10 (*Author's note*).

for him as its cause. He was removed owing to the ill success of the war, the captain and promoter of which he had ever been. The populace accused him of having caused the famine; they had suffered under his government. Therefore, setting forth from his palace in a travelling carriage, surrounded by a guard of halberdiers, with two trumpeters on horseback before him, and followed by the carriages of various nobles who formed his escort, he was received by the hisses of a number of people assembled in the Cathedral-square, and who followed after in his train. The procession having entered the street which led to that gate through which he must go forth, he began to find himself in the midst of a crowd which partly was awaiting him there, partly was attracted by the sounds of the trumpets; for the trumpeters, men of great formality, had never ceased blowing their trumpets from the time they left the palace until they arrived at the city gate. And in the trial which was occasioned by this tumult, one of these trumpeters, reprimanded for having by his trumpeting increased the uproar, replied, "My lord, this is our profession; and if his Excellency did not like us to sound our trumpets, he should have commanded us to be silent." But Don Gonzalo, either fearing to appear actuated by terror, or dreading to render the multitude still more confident, or perhaps somewhat confounded, gave no command. The mob, which the guards had attempted in vain to repulse, preceded, surrounded, and followed the carriage, crying, "there go high prices out of the city!—there goes the blood of the poor!—" and even worse things than these. When they drew near the gate, the people began to fling

stones, bricks, cabbage-stalks, in short, all the missile weapons usually employed in such expeditions; some hastened upon the walls, and thence made a last discharge upon the carriages which passed out through the gate. Immediately upon this they disbanded.

Don Gonzalo was succeeded by Ambrogio Spinola, whose name had already acquired in the wars in Flanders that military celebrity which it still enjoys.

Armies were in those times mostly composed of adventurers, enlisted by *condottieri* by profession, who received their commission from some prince, and who sometimes plied their occupation on their own account, in order then to sell both their followers and themselves. These men were attracted to this profession not so much by the pay, as by the hope of plunder, and the other allurements of utter license. There was no fixed and general discipline; this would not readily have accorded with the independent authority of the various captains. These captains themselves were not very particular regarding matters of discipline, and even had they desired a certain order, it is not very easy to see how they could have succeeded in establishing and maintaining it. Soldiers of this description would have revolted against any innovator who should have taken it into his head to abolish pillage; or at best they would have left him alone to guard his standard. And beside this, the princes who hired these troops thought more about procuring a quantity of men who would insure the success of their enterprises, than of proportioning their numbers to the means which they had of paying them, means generally very inadequate; and thus the spoils of the countries they overran became as it were

a booty tacitly accorded them. But little less celebrated than the name of Wallenstein is this maxim of his—that it is easier to maintain an army of a hundred thousand men, than one of twelve thousand. The army of which we speak was in great part composed of men who under his command had ravaged Germany in his war so celebrated among all other wars, both for itself and its effects, and which afterwards received its name from the thirty years of its duration. It was now eleven years since the war had commenced. In this army was even Wallenstein's own regiment, conducted by one of his lieutenants; most of the other captains had served under him; and among these were some who, four years later, assisted him to meet with that tragical end which is known to every one.

There were twenty-eight thousand infantry and seven thousand horse. Descending from the Valtellina towards Milan, they had to follow the Adda to where it empties itself into the Po, and then must coast along this river for a considerable distance—in all, eight days march in the duchy of Milan.

A great part of the inhabitants fled to the mountains, carrying with them their most valuable property and their cattle; some remained, in order not to abandon sick relatives, to preserve their houses from being burnt, or to keep watch over concealed or buried treasure; others, because they had nothing to lose; and a few because they hoped to gain something. When the first squadron arrived at the village where it should halt, the news quickly spread through the whole of that village and the neighbouring ones, and the soldiers immediately commenced plundering; whatever could be eaten or carried off

directly disappeared, the rest they destroyed or at least ruined; furniture became firewood; houses, stables; we say nothing of the wounds and blows and violence that was committed. All schemes and stratagems by which to conceal property were at best useless, often only productive of terrible consequences. The soldiers, people much better practised in these arts than the poor peasants, groped in every hole and corner of the houses, dismantling and pulling down walls; they easily discovered in the gardens the freshly turned up earth; they even ascended to the mountains to steal the cattle; guided by treacherous peasants, they descended into the caves in search of some wealthy inhabitant who might have concealed himself there; they would drag him to his house, and torturing him with threats and blows, constrain him to disclose to them his hidden treasure.

At length they depart; they are gone,—in the distance the sounds of their drums and trumpets die away, and some hours of a terrible calm succeed. But again is heard the fearful roll of the drum, which announces another squadron. These, ferocious at finding no longer anything to plunder, destroy all that remains; burn the furniture, the doors, the beams, the casks, the very houses even; and exercise the most terrible cruelties towards the inhabitants. Things grew worse and worse for twenty days, for into so many detachments was the army divided.

Colico was the first village in the duchy which these demons invaded; they then threw themselves upon Bellano; and next entered and spread themselves through the Valsassena, from whence they marched into the territory of Lecco.

CHAPTER XXIX.

HERE among the poor terrified inhabitants we find persons of our acquaintance.

Who did not happen to see Don Abbondio that day, when suddenly the rumours of the descent of this army, of its approach and of its excesses, spread itself through the country, can form no just idea of embarrassment and terror. "They are coming! there are thirty—forty—fifty thousand! They are devils, Arians, antichrists! They have sacked Cortenuova; have set fire to Primaluna; they are ravaging Introbio, Pasturo, Barsio; they have arrived at Balabbo; to-morrow they will be here!" Such were the reports which passed from mouth to mouth, and there was a rushing about and a standing still by turns, a tumultuous consultation, a hesitation of whether they should fly or remain, an assembling of women, a wailing and tearing of hair. Don Abbondio had resolved upon flight, and had resolved upon it earlier than all the rest; he discovered, however, in every path he might take, in every place where he could conceal himself, invincible obstacles and frightful dangers. "What must I do?" he exclaimed: "where shall I go?" The mountains, without speaking of the difficulty of the ascent, were not secure; it was already well known that the German lancers clambered up them like cats, even where they could scarcely have had the slightest

indication or hope of prey. The lake had overflowed its banks; there blew a violent wind; besides this, the greater part of the boatmen, fearing to be forced to carry over the soldiers or the baggage, had fled with their boats to the opposite shore; the few which remained were crowded with passengers; together with their heavy cargoes and the tempest, it was expected that every moment they would be lost. It was impossible to find either a carriage, or a horse, or any other means of conveyance, to carry him out of the route of the army. Don Abbondio could not proceed very far on foot, and besides he feared to be overtaken on the road. The confines of the Bergamascan territories were not so far but that his legs might have carried him there in one journey; but already the report had reached them that a detachment of *cappelletti* had been despatched in all haste to guard the frontiers, and keep the German lancers in subjection; and these *cappelletti* were no less devils incarnate than the lancers, and on their side did all the mischief they could. The poor man ran about his room like one insane, almost out of his wits with terror; he hastened to Perpetua, to concert some resolution with her; but Perpetua, occupied in collecting the most valuable articles, and concealing them under the floor in the smallest holes, passed on, busy and preoccupied, with her hands and arms full, and only replied, "immediately I shall have placed these things in safety, and then we will do like all the rest." Don Abbondio wished to detain her, and discuss with her the various plans to be resolved upon; but she, between her occupation and her haste, the terror which she herself was seized with, and the anger she felt at seeing the

terror of her master, was in the present circumstances even less tractable than usual. "Others do the best they can, and so will we. Excuse me, but you only hinder me. Do you think that other people have not their lives to save? Why, are the soldiers coming to make war upon you in particular? You might at least lend a hand in such a moment as this, instead of only getting into one's way." And with these and similar replies she succeeded in ridding herself of him, having already arranged in her mind that, when all this hurried business should be at an end, she would take him like a child by the arm and drag him up the mountains. Being thus left alone, he approached a window, looked out, listened, and perceiving some one pass, he cried, in a tone between that of lamentation and reproach, "Do your poor Curate the charity to seek for him some kind of a horse, a mule, or an ass. Is it really possible that no one will assist me? O what people they are! Wait for me, at least, so that I can go with you; wait until there are fifteen or twenty of you who can go along with me altogether, so that I am not left abandoned here. Will you leave me in the hands of these dogs? Do you not know that the greater part are Lutherans, who consider murdering a priest a meritorious work? Will you leave me here to suffer martyrdom? O what people—what people!"

But to whom did he address these words? To men who passed along, bowed under the burden of their poor property, full of thought regarding that which they had left behind in their houses; some were driving their cattle before them; others dragging along their children, who were also heavily laden, and

their wives hurried on carrying their infants in their arms. Some pursued their route without returning any reply, or even without casting a glance towards the speaker; one said, "Ah, sir! you must do as well as you can; you are fortunate in having no family to care for. Assist yourself, bestir yourself." /

"Oh, unfortunate that I am!" exclaimed Don Abbondio. "O what people! what hard hearts! There is no charity: every one thinks only of himself, and no one will think of me." And here he went in search of Perpetua.

"Oh! here you are just at the right time," said she, "and the money?"

"What shall we do?"

"Give me it, that I may go and bury it in the garden with the plate."

"But ——"

"But, but—give it me here; keep a few pence for our necessities, and then leave the rest to me."

Don Abbondio obeyed; he went towards his chest, drew forth his little treasure, and consigned it into Perpetua's hands, who said, "I shall go and bury it in the garden at the foot of the fig-tree," and away she went.

Shortly after she entered with one basket in which was a supply of provisions, and with another which was empty, and into this, with the greatest haste, she began laying a change of linen for her master and herself, saying meanwhile—"you yourself will at least carry the Breviary."

"But where are we going?"

"Where is every one going? First of all we shall go into the road; and there we shall hear and see what we must do."

At this moment, Agnese entered with a large basket on her shoulders, and with the air of one who is about to make an important proposition.

Agnese, being also resolved not to await such dangerous guests, alone as she was, in her cottage, with the remains of the Unknown's gold, had for some time been uncertain as to where she should retire. The remainder of these scudi, which during the famine had been of such signal service to her, was the principal cause of her alarm and irresolution; for she had heard say, how in the villages already invaded those who were possessed of money had been reduced to a greater extremity than the others, exposed at once as they were to the violence of the foreigners and the snares of their fellow-countrymen. It is true she had never confided to any one the secret of this wealth, which as it were had fallen from heaven, except to Don Abbondio, to whose house she went time after time to get a scudi changed, always, however, leaving with him something for the poor. But concealed money, particularly to those who are not accustomed to such a possession, is a cause of constant alarm and distrust of others. Now, whilst she was busied in hiding here and there as well as she could those things which she could not carry away with her, and thinking also of the scudi which she had concealed in her petticoat, she remembered that, together with these, the Unknown had made her the most friendly offer of his service; she remembered the things she had heard related of his castle, situated in such a very secure place, and which, without permission of the master, none but the birds of the air could approach; and there she resolved to go and seek an asylum.

She thought in what way it would be possible to make herself known to this Signor, and immediately Don Abbondio recurred to her mind, who, since the conversation with the Archbishop, had been particularly gracious towards her, and had exhibited a kindness which was all the warmer, there being no longer any danger of his compromising himself, for the two young people were far enough away, and there was no probability of a request which would have tested his benevolence. She imagined that, in this general confusion, the poor man would be even more embarrassed and alarmed than herself, and that this scheme would also appear very good to him; therefore she came to propose it. She found him with Perpetua, and laid the proposal before both of them.

“What do you say to it, Perpetua?” demanded Don Abbondio.

“I say that it is an inspiration from heaven, and that we must not lose time, but immediately set out.”

“And then ——”

“And then, when we are there, we shall find ourselves very well satisfied. This Signor, it is now well known, only desires to assist his neighbour; and he will be very happy to give us an asylum. There, on the frontiers, and almost in the clouds, the soldiers certainly will never reach us. And then besides, in this castle, we shall find something to eat. And up among the mountains, when these good gifts of God were ended,” saying this, she arranged the provisions in the little basket, “we should find ourselves but badly off.”

“He is then converted—he is really then converted?”

“What doubt can there be about it, after all that is known, after what you yourself have seen?”

“But, if we should be putting ourselves in gaol?”

“In gaol! With all your excuses, pardon me, we shall never come to a conclusion. Good Agnese, you have indeed had an excellent idea.” Perpetua placed the large basket on the table, passed her arms through the straps, and heaved it upon her shoulders.

“But could we not,” said Don Abbondio, “find some men who would come with us, and form an escort for their curate? If we should encounter some ruffian, and there are only too many of the kind about, what assistance could you be to me?”

“Another excuse—and only to lose time!” exclaimed Perpetua. “Go then, and look out for such a man, and see whether you can find him, now every one is looking after his own affairs. Come!—go and fetch your Breviary and your hat, and let us be gone.”

Don Abbondio went, and immediately re-appeared with his Breviary under his arm, his hat on his head, and his staff in his hand; then, through a small door which opened into the churchyard, they passed out. Perpetua closed the door, more out of regard to custom than from any faith which she placed in this lock or in these panels, and then put the key in her pocket. Don Abbondio in passing by cast a glance at the church, and muttered between his teeth, “it is the people’s business to take care of the church; it is built for their service. If they had any love for their church, they would think about that; if they have not, that’s their concern.”

They travelled on through the fields very silently,

each one thinking over his own affairs, and glancing around them, especially Don Abbondio, to see whether any suspicious figure, or anything extraordinary presented itself. But they did not meet any one; the people were either in their houses waiting to guard them, busy making up their packages, or upon the roads which led to the heights.

Don Abbondio, having sighed, and sighed again, having broke forth in several interjections, commenced grumbling aloud. He attacked the Duke de Nevers, who should have stayed in France, enjoyed himself there, and played the prince, instead of which he wished to be Duke of Mantua, in despite of all the world; the Emperor, who ought to have had judgment enough for the others, and who would after all have been Emperor, had Peter or Paul been Duke of Mantua. But above all did he attack the Governor, whose business it ought to have been to keep this scourge at as great a distance as possible from his country, and yet it was he himself who had brought all this misery upon them through his love of war. "These Signors ought to be here," said our poor Curate, "to experience how delightful all this is. They will have a fine account to render. But in the meantime those who are innocent suffer."

"Only leave these people alone; it is not they who will come to our aid," said Perpetua. "Pardon me, but this is your usual gossip which ends in nothing. What makes me more uneasy ——"

"Is what?"

Perpetua, who during their walk had thought over at leisure the hasty concealment of the property, began to torment herself that she had not brought

such an article, that she had so ill secreted something else, that she had left behind a trace which might direct the thieves, that ——

“ Well done!” exclaimed Don Abbondio, who now felt sufficiently secure of his life, to suffer anxiety regarding his property, “ well done! what were you about? where was your head gone to?”

“ How!” cried Perpetua, suddenly stopping short, and placing her arms as much a-kimbo as the basket on her back would permit, “ how! you overwhelm me with reproaches, when it was you yourself who made me lose my head, instead of having assisted and encouraged me. I have perhaps thought more of the household property than of my own. I have not had a single soul to lend me a hand; if anything evil happens, I have nothing to say. I have done more than my duty.”

Agnese interrupted these disputes by lamenting her own woes. “ She did not complain,” she said, “ so much of all this inconvenience and trouble, as of seeing her hope of speedy re-union with her Lucia vanish;” for, if you remember, it was precisely this autumn that they had arranged to meet; neither was it to be supposed that Donna Pressede would come for country air into this neighbourhood; and even had she come, she would speedily have departed again, like every one else.

The sight of the various places they passed rendered these thoughts of Agnese still more bitter, and her vexation more evident. Having left the by-paths, they had entered the high road, the same along which the poor woman had for so short a time conducted her daughter home, after they had both lodged toge-

ther in the tailor's house. Already she perceived the village.

"We will go and salute these good people," said Agnese.

"And let us rest ourselves a little, for I begin already to have had enough of this basket; and let us eat a mouthful also," said Perpetua.

"Under the one condition, that we lose no time; for this is by no means a mere journey of pleasure," concluded Don Abbondio.

They were received with open arms and kind looks by their good host and hostess, who were reminded of a benevolent deed. "The more good you do," remarks our Anonymous, "the oftener will you meet with countenances which will inspire you with joy."

Agnese, embracing the good woman, burst into a flood of tears, which greatly relieved her; and replied with many sobs to the questions which both husband and wife asked regarding Lucia.

"She is better off than we," said Don Abbondio; "she is at Milan, out of all danger, far away from all this devilish business."

"The Signor Curato and his companions are escaping?" asked the tailor.

"Certainly," replied the master and servant in one breath.

"I am truly sorry for you."

"We are on our way to the castle of —," remarked Don Abbondio.

"You have decided very wisely; you will be as secure there as in a church."

"And pray are you not afraid in this place?" asked Don Abbondio.

"We are too far out of the road, thank heaven; and even should the worst happen—which God forbid—we should still have time to escape."

The three fugitives had decided to rest there a few moments, and recover breath. It was the hour of dinner: "Will you honour my poor table?" said the tailor; "at least you will meet with a hearty welcome."

Perpetua said that they had brought a small supply of provisions with them. After a little ceremony on both sides, they agreed to place all on the table and dine in company.

The children had arranged themselves with a deal of joy around their old friend Agnese. The tailor ordered a little girl—the same who had carried his donation to the widow Maria; who knows whether our readers may still remember the circumstance?—to go and unhusk some early chestnuts which were lying in a corner, and put them to roast.

"And thou," said he to a little boy, "go into the garden and shake down some of the peaches, and bring them here,—all of them. And go thou," said he to a third child, "and climb into the fig-tree, and gather a few of the ripest. You are only too well versed in the business." He himself went to broach a little barrel, and his wife went in search of some table-linen. Perpetua drew forth her provisions. The cloth was laid; there was a coarse napkin and an earthenware plate placed at the post of honour for Don Abbondio, also a cover which Perpetua had brought in her basket. The dinner was served, and they dined, if not gaily, at least with far more comfort than any one of the guests had expected to enjoy that day.

“What does the Signor Curato say to a dispersion of this kind?” said the tailor. “It seems to me that I am reading the history of the Moors in France.”

“What I say to it? Why should such a misfortune have fallen upon me!”

“You have, however, chosen an excellent asylum,” returned the host; “for who can reach the heights without the Signor’s permission? You will find plenty of company there. I have heard that many people have already taken refuge there, and others arrive every hour.”

“I hope that we shall be well received,” said Don Abbondio. “I am acquainted with this worthy Signor; and the other time when I had the honour of being in his company, he was so very polite!”

“And he sent me word by his illustrious lordship,” said Agnese, “that if ever I stood in need of assistance, I had only to go to him.”

“A grând and beautiful conversion!” resumed Don Abbondio; “and he perseveres in it, does he not—he perseveres in it?”

The tailor here began at much length to expatiate upon the holy life now led by the Unknown, and how, after being for so long the scourge of the whole country, he was become its example and benefactor.

“And all those people which he had with him —— all that band? ——” demanded Don Abbondio, who had more than once heard speak of them, but who knew nothing positive.

“The greater part have left him,” replied the tailor; “and those that have stayed have changed their mode of life, in such a way! In short, this castle has become like the Thebaid; but you know all this.”

He then began speaking to Agnese about the Cardinal's visit. "A great man!" said he, "a great man! Pity that he left here in such haste that I was unable to do him a little honour. How happy I should be to have an opportunity of speaking to him again, a little more at my leisure!"

Having risen from table, he made them observe a print representing the Cardinal, which he had fastened upon the door in veneration of this good man, and also that he might be able to tell every one that the portrait was not like, for he had examined the Cardinal in person, closely and at his leisure, and in this very room too.

"And they mean this thing for him?" said Agnese. "The dress is like him, but ——"

"It is not like—is it?" interrupted the tailor; "that's what I always say; they can't cheat us with it—eh? But if there's nothing else, there's at least his name underneath; it is just a memory of him."

Don Abbondio appeared in haste to depart; the tailor ran to seek a vehicle to carry the fugitives to the foot of the ascent, and shortly after returned to say that it was coming. He then turned towards Don Abbondio, and said, "Signor Curato, if you should desire to carry any book with you up to the castle for a little pastime, I could be of service to you perhaps, for I also amuse myself a little with reading. They are not such books as yours, they are books in the vulgar tongue; but yet ——"

"Thanks, a thousand thanks," returned Don Abbondio; "the circumstances are such, that I have scarcely brains enough left to read my Breviary."

Whilst they are exchanging thanks, condolences,

good wishes, invitations, and promises to pay another visit upon their return, the cart has paused before the door. The baskets are placed in it; they mount, and they begin, with a little more calmness and tranquillity of mind, the second half of their journey.

The tailor had related to Don Abbondio the truth regarding the Unknown. From that day on which he left him, the Signor had pursued the course of life which he had proposed to himself—repairing wrongs, reconciling himself with his enemies, succouring the unfortunate, doing, in short, all the good which lay in his power. The courage which formerly he had exhibited in offence and defence, now he exhibited in doing neither one nor the other. He was now always seen alone and unarmed; disposed to suffer the possible consequences of all the violence he had committed, and persuaded that it would only be committing a fresh crime should he employ force in the defence of himself, who was a debtor to the whole of society; persuaded that all evil done to him would be a sin against God, yet only towards him a just retribution; and that he less than any one had a right to avenge himself. But he was not less inviolable than when he bore arms, and was surrounded by so many armed followers. The remembrance of his ancient ferocity, and the spectacle of his present gentleness, the former exciting a desire for vengeance, the latter rendering this vengeance so easy, conspired in exciting and maintaining an admiration of him which served principally as his safeguard. This man, whom no one could ever humble, had humbled himself. The hatred which his scorn and fear had excited against him had vanished now before this new humility:

those whom he had wronged, had obtained, contrary to their expectations and without danger, a satisfaction which they could never have promised themselves even by the most signal vengeance, the satisfaction of seeing a man repentant of his evil deeds, and participating, so to say, in their indignation. Many whose anger during such a length of years had been all the more bitter and intense at seeing no probability of their ever becoming more powerful than he, and thus finding an opportunity by which to avenge their injuries, now meeting him alone, unarmed and unresisting, felt no other impulse than that of respect and compassion. In this voluntary abasement, his air and countenance had acquired, without himself being aware of it, something indescribably noble and elevated; for now stronger than ever might be perceived in his demeanour a carelessness towards all danger. Even his most violent and obstinate enemies felt awed and checked by the public veneration for this penitent and beneficent man. So strong was this public veneration, that he often found himself embarrassed by it, and had great difficulty in preventing his internal compunction from depicting itself too visibly in his countenance and air, and thus, by abasing himself too much, be exalted too highly in general estimation. He had chosen for himself the lowest seat in the church; there was no fear lest it should be occupied by any one else—that would have been like usurping a place of honour. To have offended this man, or even to have treated him with irreverence, would have appeared not only a crime and an infamous thing, but even sacrilege.

These and yet other causes averted from him the

vengeance of the public authorities, and procured him even from them a security which he had never anticipated. His rank and high connexions, which always had served him as a certain defence, were now of double value, seeing that this illustrious and dreaded name had become glorified through his exemplary conduct and striking conversion. The magistrates and the nobility had publicly rejoiced with the people over this change; and it would indeed have appeared very strange to denounce a man who had been the object of so much joy. Besides, a power occupied in perpetual warfare, and always unfortunate in violent and ever-recurring rebellions, might consider itself happy in being liberated from one of its most dangerous and untameable enemies. To torment a saint did not appear a good method by which to cancel the shame of not having known how to subdue a villain; and this example of their clemency would only have deterred similar characters from becoming inoffensive. Probably also the part taken by the Cardinal Federigo in his conversion, and his name being associated with that of the converted, served also as a sacred buckler.

Thus this very man, who, had he fallen by misfortune and evil destiny, would have been trampled under foot by high and low, now that he voluntarily prostrated himself upon the earth, was pardoned by all, revered by many.

By degrees the greater number of his myrmidons, unable to accustom themselves to this new discipline, and seeing that there was no probability of change, had taken their departure. Some had sought other masters, often among the former friends of their

former lord; others had enlisted in some *terzo*, as it was then called, of Spain, or Mantua, or perhaps with some other belligerent party; some had taken up their abode on the highway, there to wage petty war upon their own account. The same thing happened with those who previous to his orders had been stationed in various other places. Those who had accustomed themselves to this new mode of life, or who had voluntarily embraced it, the greater part of whom were natives of the valley, had returned to labour in the fields, or to ply those trades which they had learned in their youth, and which they had abandoned for the bravo's profession; the few who were foreigners remained in the castle, occupying the place of domestics; all, as though at the same time with their master inspired by the grace of God, passed like him their lives, neither offering nor receiving offence, unarmed and respected.

But when, upon the arrival of these German troops, a few fugitives from menaced or invaded villages arrived at the castle seeking an asylum, the Unknown, quite happy that these his awe-inspiring walls should now be sought as a place of refuge, received the wanderers with expressions rather of gratitude than of mere courtesy. He announced that his dwelling should be opened to whosoever desired to take refuge there; and thought immediately of putting not only his castle, but also the whole valley, in a state of defence, should either German lancers, or *cappelletti*, ever dare to molest him. He assembled his few remaining servants, and addressed a few words to them regarding the good opportunity which God thus offered them and himself of exercising themselves for once

in aid of the weak, whom they had so often oppressed and terrified; and with that natural tone of command which announced his certainty of their ready obedience, he informed them in general terms of what he desired should be done, and, above all, prescribed how they should conduct themselves towards the fugitives, and consider them as friends and defenders. He had the arms and ammunition brought down from a room in the roof where he had consigned them, and caused them to be distributed among his household. He sent word to his peasants and tenants in the valley, that any one who desired should come armed to the castle; he gave arms to those who were without, selected some as officers, and placed the others under their command; he assigned their posts, at the entrance, and in different parts of the valley, upon the ascent, and before the castle-gates; he fixed in what manner and at what hours they should change guard, as in a camp, or also as had been customary in this very castle during the wicked portion of his life.

Apart by themselves in a corner of this same garret were placed the arms which he himself had worn—his famous carabine, his muskets, his swords, his daggers, lying on the ground or reared up against the wall. Not one of the servitors dared to remove them, but they concerted among themselves that they would ask their master which they should bring him. “Not one of them,” he replied; and whether from principle, or having made a vow, he remained always unarmed at the head of his garrison.

At the same time, he set in motion a number of other men, and women also, who were in his service and among his dependents, to prepare the castle for

the reception of as many people as possible ; they had to erect beds, and dispose sacks and mattresses, in all the apartments, and even in the halls, which were turned into dormitories for the occasion. He ordered that an abundant supply of provisions should be laid in for the use of the guests whom God should send him, and who, in fact, arrived in greater numbers day by day. He, meanwhile, was never idle ; he was either in or out of the castle, on the heights, or in the valley, visiting the various posts, examining every thing, shewing himself everywhere, placing and maintaining every thing in order, by his word, his glance, and his presence. In his castle, upon the road, he received cordially all the fugitives who arrived ; and all, whether they had seen him before, or whether they now saw him for the first time, gazed upon him with astonishment, forgetting for a moment their misfortunes and their terror which had conducted them thither ; and would again turn round to look after him as he pursued his way.

END OF VOLUME II.

LONDON :

Printed by Manning and Mason, Ivy Lane, St. Paul's.

THE
BETROTHED LOVERS.
ETC. ETC.

THE
BETROTHED LOVERS:

A
Milanese Story of the Seventeenth Century.

WITH
THE COLUMN OF INFAMY.

BY
ALESSANDRO MANZONI.

IN THREE VOLUMES.—VOL. III.

LONDON:
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1845.

LONDON:

Printed by Manning and Mason, Ivy lane, Paternoster-row.

THE BETROTHED.

CHAPTER XXX.

ALTHOUGH the road by which our three travellers approached the valley was not the one most traversed by fugitives, still they soon, in this the second half of their journey, fell in with companions in misfortune, who had entered or were just entering the highway by paths and by-roads. Each time that the cart overtook a pedestrian there was an exchange of questions and replies. This one had escaped, like our travellers, without awaiting the arrival of the soldiers; another, had heard the drums and trumpets; while a third, had actually seen the troops, and painted them as terror is wont to paint.

“We are fortunate indeed,” cried the two women; “let us thank heaven for it! Our property may go, but we ourselves are in safety.”

But poor Don Abbondio did not find such great cause of rejoicing; this concourse of people, and above all the still greater concourse he heard of at the castle, began to cause him some vexation. “Oh, what a piece of work!” he muttered to the two women in a moment when no one was by; “oh, what a piece of

work! Don't you see that such a number of people assembling themselves in one place, is just as though they wished to attract the soldiers? Every thing concealed, every thing carried away, nothing left in the houses,—the soldiers will certainly believe that the treasure must be up in the castle. They will certainly come after us. Oh, unfortunate that I am; upon what sort of an enterprise have I embarked!"

"Oh! they will have something else to do than to ascend to the castle," said Perpetua; "besides, they must pursue their march. And besides, I have always heard say, that in danger it is best to have plenty of company."

"Plenty of company—plenty of company!" replied Don Abbondio, "poor woman! Don't you know that every lancer could devour a hundred of these people? And then, if they should play the fool, it would be a fine thing, would it not, to find oneself in the midst of a battle! Oh, unfortunate that I am! It would have been a less evil to have ascended the mountains. Why do they all wish to thrust themselves into one place —— Cursed people!" he muttered in a lower voice; "all here: and on, on, on with you then, one after the other, like a flock of senseless sheep."

"As for that," remarked Agnese, "they also might say the same thing of us."

"Be still, be still," said Don Abbondio, "all this gossip helps nothing. What is done is done; here we are, and here we must remain. Heaven protect us!"

But his vexation became still greater when at the entrance of the valley he perceived a considerable guard of armed men posted—partly stationed in a

house, partly standing before the door. He glanced at them out of the corner of his eye. There were none of those faces which he had seen upon his former painful journey, or if there were any such among them, they were very much changed; but spite of all this, it is impossible to describe the annoyance this sight caused him. "Oh, unfortunate that I am!" thought he; only see what follies they are committing! It could not fail to be otherwise; I ought to have expected as much from a man of this description. But what will he do—will he make war? will he play the king? Oh, alas, for me! In such vexatious circumstances as these, when one would wish to conceal oneself under the earth, this man does all that lies in his power to make himself observed, to exhibit himself. It seems as though he really wished to invite them!"

"Only see now, Signor," said Perpetua, "what brave men there are here to defend us. Only let the soldiers come. These are not like our terrified peasants who are good for nothing but to use their legs."

"Hush," replied Don Abbondio, in a low but angry voice; "hush, for you don't know what you are talking about. Pray heaven the soldiers may be in haste, and may not know what is going on here, and that this place has been turned into a fortress. Do not you know that it is the profession of soldiers to take fortresses? They seek nothing else: for them, making an assault is like going to a wedding; every thing they find is theirs, and they put every one to the sword. Oh, poor me! Enough,—I shall see whether there is any means of placing oneself in safety up among these cliffs. They shall never take me in a battle; oh, no! They shall never take *me* in a battle."

“If you are then afraid of being defended and assisted ——” recommenced Perpetua; but Don Abbondio interrupted her sharply, in an under-tone however; “hush! take good heed, and don’t repeat this conversation; take good heed. Remember that here it is necessary always to have a smiling countenance, and to approve all that is seen.”

At the Malanotte they encountered another post of armed men, to whom Don Abbondio very respectfully took off his hat, saying to himself, “Alas, alas! I am come into a perfect camp.” Here the cart stopped; they descended, Don Abbondio paid the driver in haste, dismissed him, and commenced the ascent with his two companions without saying a single word. The sight of all these various places awoke within him the remembrance of former miseries, which now most unpleasantly mingled itself with his present sufferings. And Agnese, who had never before seen this valley, but who in her imagination had formed a fantastic picture, which presented itself to her every time she thought upon Lucia’s frightful journey, now seeing it in reality, experienced, as it were, a still more lively sense of her daughter’s sufferings. “Oh, Signor Curato!” she exclaimed, “only to think that my poor Lucia has passed along this road.”

“Will you be silent? What a thoughtless woman you are!” cried Don Abbondio in her ear; “are these proper subjects of conversation here? Do you not know that we are in his territories? It is fortunate that no one heard you; but if you speak in this manner ——”

“Oh,” said Agnese, “but now that he is a saint ——”

“Hush!” replied Don Abbondio; “do you believe that one can freely tell saints every thing that passes through one’s mind? Reflect, rather, how you may thank him for all the good he has done you.”

“Oh, I have long ago thought about that! Do you think I have no knowledge of politeness?”

“Politeness does not consist in saying things which may displease, especially to those who are not accustomed to hear such things. And recollect well, both of you, that this is not a place in which to tattle, or to say every thing which comes into your head. It is the castle of a great lord, as you already know; you see what a lot of company there is; all manner of people are hastening here; therefore, be wise, if you can; weigh well your words, and above all let them be few, and only spoken when necessary; one can never err in keeping silence.”

“But you do worse, with all your ——” resumed Perpetua.

“Hush,” cried Don Abbondio, with a loud voice, and at the same time hastily took off his hat, and made a profound reverence, for he had observed the Unknown descending towards them. The Signor also had seen and recognised Don Abbondio, and he quickened his pace to greet them.

“Signor Curato,” said he, when they had approached nearer, “I should wish to have offered you the hospitality of my house upon a happier occasion; but at all events I am very happy to be able to serve you in any way.”

“Confiding in the great goodness of your illustrious lordship,” replied Don Abbondio, “I have been bold enough to come, under these sad circum-

stances, to incommode your lordship; and as your illustrious lordship sees, I have also taken the liberty to bring companions along with me. This is my housekeeper ——”

“She is welcome,” said the Unknown.

“And this,” continued Don Abbondio, “is a woman whom your lordship has already benefited; she is the mother of that —— of that ——”

“Of Lucia,” said Agnese.

“Of Lucia!” exclaimed the Unknown, turning towards Agnese. “Benefited? *I!* Immortal God! It is you, you who confer a benefit upon me, by coming here —— to me —— into this house. You are welcome, indeed. You bring with you the blessing of heaven.”

“Oh, really!” said Agnese; “I come to incommode you. I also,” she continued, approaching his ear, “I also have to thank your lordship ——”

The Unknown cut short these words by eagerly inquiring after Lucia; and having learned where she was, he turned round to accompany his new guests to the castle, which he persisted in doing, spite of their ceremonious resistance. Agnese cast a glance at the Curate, which was intended to say, “only see whether there was any need for you to come between us with your fine advice.”

“Have the soldiers arrived in your parish?” demanded the Unknown.

“No, my lord, we would not await these demons,” replied Don Abbondio. “Heaven knows whether then we should have escaped alive out of their hands, and have come to inconvenience your illustrious lordship.”

“Well, now you can take courage,” returned the Unknown; “for now you are in safety. They will not come here; and even should they make the attempt, we are ready to receive them.”

“Let us hope that they will *not* come,” said Don Abbondio. And I hear,” added he, pointing towards the opposite mountains which shut in the valley, “I hear that on that side also, wanders another band of these people, but —— but ——”

“That is true,” replied the Unknown; “but do not fear, for we are ready to receive them also.”

“We are between two fires,” thought Don Abbondio to himself. “Oh, what a place I have let myself be drawn into—and by two old gossips too! And then the man appears to delight in all this! Oh, what people there are in this world!”

Having entered the castle, the Signor had Agnese and Perpetua conducted to a chamber in the quarter assigned to the women, and which occupied three sides of the inner court in the most retired part of the building, situated upon a steep and isolated rock which overlooked a precipice. The men were lodged in rooms opening into the other court, and upon the esplanade. That part of the edifice which separated the two courts, and which communicated with both by a long gallery, opening opposite the principal gate, was in part occupied by provisions, in part served as a *dépôt* for the property of the fugitives. In the men’s quarter were certain chambers destined for the use of ecclesiastics who might arrive. The Unknown accompanied Don Abbondio to such a chamber; he was the first to take possession.

Our fugitives remained about twenty-three or

twenty-four days in the castle, in the midst of a constant bustle, in a large company, which in the first part of their stay kept ever increasing; but as yet nothing extraordinary occurred. Perhaps not a day passed without a call to arms. The lancers were coming on that side; here the *cappelletti* had been seen. Upon every alarm, the Unknown sent men to explore; if it was necessary, he would take with him a band of armed followers, always kept ready for the purpose, and issue out of the valley towards that quarter where the danger had been announced. It was a singular spectacle to see a band of determined men armed *cap-à-pie*, marching in file like a regular troop, conducted by a man without arms! Most generally the marauders were foragers and disbanded thieves, who fled before they were surprised. But once, chasing a number of these, intending to teach them never again to shew their faces in those parts, the Unknown received intelligence that a neighbouring village was invaded and being sacked. These were lancers of different corps, who, having remained behind to pillage, had united themselves, and suddenly fallen upon the hamlets near to the one in which the army was quartered, harassing and persecuting the inhabitants in all possible ways. The Unknown addressed a brief discourse to his men, and then led them on to the village.

They arrived quite unexpectedly. The rogues, who had only thought of carrying off booty, no sooner saw themselves surprised by men ranged in battle array and ready to combat, than they, without waiting for one another, left their work unfinished, and fled in the greatest haste in the direction whence

they had come. The Unknown followed them for a considerable distance, then having made a halt, he remained some time waiting whether anything fresh should occur, and then retraced his steps. Passing again through the hamlet which he had saved, it would be impossible to describe with what applause and blessings this little band and its captain were received. In the castle, among this multitude, composed of individuals of different ranks, habits, sexes, and ages, there never arose the slightest disorder. The Unknown had placed sentinels at various posts, and these carefully watched that no inconvenience should arise.

The Signor had also besought the ecclesiastics, and the men of most authority among the refugees, to take certain rounds, and vigilantly watch over the comfort of their companions in misfortune. As often as he could, he himself visited his guests, and shewed himself everywhere; but, even during his absence, the remembrance of the master served to keep in check those who might stand in need of restraint. Besides, they were all fugitives, and therefore generally people inclined to quiet: the thoughts of their houses and property for some, the recollection of relatives or friends left behind in danger, and the constant intelligence which was received from without, by lowering their spirits, always maintained them in a quiet state of mind.

There were, however, some men of a warmer temperament and courage, who endeavoured to pass their days in gaiety. They had abandoned their homes because they were not strong enough to defend them, but they found no pleasure in weeping and sighing

about a thing for which there was no remedy, or in fancying and contemplating in imagination the misery which they would only see too well with their eyes. Families of mutual acquaintance had fled together, or had met in the castle, fresh friendships were formed; and thus the crowd had separated itself into little circles. Whoever possessed money and discretion could descend and dine in the valley, where taverns had been erected in great haste. With some, between every mouthful there issued forth a sigh, and they could only speak of woe; others only remembered misfortune to exhort their neighbours not to think of it. To those who could not or would not be at this expense, bread, wine, and soup, were distributed in the castle every day; besides which, several tables were spread for those guests whom the Unknown had expressly invited; our three friends were among this number.

Not wishing to encroach upon the hospitality of the Unknown, Agnese and Perpetua had employed themselves in assisting in the various services demanded by such a number of guests; a good part of the day was spent in these occupations, the rest in chatting with certain acquaintance they had made, and with poor Don Abbondio. He had nothing to do, yet he did not suffer from *ennui*; fear kept him company. As to the fear of an assault, we believe that this no longer troubled him, or if it did, it was the least terrific of his fears, for upon a little reflection he was forced to perceive how weak was its foundation. But the image of the surrounding country, inundated from all sides by these terrible soldiers, the arms and armed men he had always under

his eyes, a castle—this castle! the thought of all the events which every moment might occur under the present circumstances, all conduced to keep him in a constant, indistinct terror; without saying anything of the vexation which the thought of his poor house caused him. During all the time he remained in this asylum, he never removed himself farther than a musket-shot from the castle, and never set foot on the descent; his only promenade was upon the esplanade, and a little way on this side of the castle, now on the other, where he would gaze down among the cliffs and precipices, to discover whether there were any practicable passage by which he might escape in case of imminent danger. He saluted all his fellow refugees with very profound reverences, but he conversed with very few. His most frequent conversations were held with the two women; to them he freely confided his alarms, although at the risk of being interrupted by Perpetua, and ridiculed by Agnese. At table, where he remained but a short time, and spoke still less, he heard the news of this terrible march, either as circulated from mouth to mouth, or brought by some one who at first had wished to remain at home, but who at last unable to save his property, and often in a wounded condition, had been forced to fly. Every day there was some new history of misfortune. Some newsmongers by profession diligently collected all the current reports, and spread them among their companions. Great were the discussions regarding the regiments, and whether the infantry or the cavalry were the worst: people repeated as well as they could the names of certain captains; they recounted their former enter-

prises, they specified the various halts and marches. Upon such a day, such a regiment would arrive at such a village. Above all they endeavoured to gain information and keep account of the regiments which crossed the bridge of Lecco, for those indeed might be considered fairly to have left the country. Wallenstein's cavalry passed, then the infantry of Merode, then the cavalry of Anhalt, then the infantry of Brandenburg, then the cavalry of Montecuccoli and Ferrari, next followed Altringer, Fürstenberg, Colloredo; the Croats, Torquato Conti, and many, many others; and, when it pleased heaven, the regiment of Galasso, which was the last. The flying Venetian squadron withdrew itself, and all the country to the right and to the left was free. Already the fugitives out of those villages which were first invaded had departed from the castle, and every day others turned their faces homeward. We believe that our three friends were the last to depart, and this by the desire of Don Abbondio, who feared if he returned immediately to his dwelling, he might still find there some loitering soldiers. It was in vain that Perpetua represented to him that the longer they delayed, the easier it was for the thieves of the country to enter the house and possess themselves of what yet remained; Don Abbondio, however, was always sure, whenever he considered his safety endangered, to remain the victorious party; unless the danger was so imminent that he entirely lost his mind through it.

The day fixed for their departure, the Unknown ordered a carriage to be ready prepared for them at the Malanotte; he had a provision of linen placed in the carriage for Agnese. The Unknown drew her also

aside, and made her accept another roll of scudi to repair the damage which she would discover at home; although, placing her hand upon her bosom, she assured him that she had still some of the former ones concealed there.

“When you see your poor Lucia again,” said he at last—“I know that she prays for me, although I have done her such wrong—tell her that I thank her, and confide in God, who will turn her prayers into blessings for herself.”

He then persisted in accompanying all the three as far as their carriage. The reader can imagine Don Abbondio’s humble and overstrained thanks, and Perpetua’s compliments. They set forth; they halted, according to their promise at the tailor’s house, but would not even sit down; here they heard a hundred things related of the soldiers’ march.

“Ah, Signor Curato!” cried the tailor, offering his arm to assist him in remounting the carriage; “there’s something worth printing in an uproar like the present!”

After proceeding a short way on their journey, our travellers began to see something of what they had so often heard described. Vineyards despoiled, not by the vintage, but as by a hurricane; the vines trampled under foot and broken; the props torn up; the earth trodden on and strewn with chips, leaves, and young suckers; the trees felled, or their branches lopped off; the hedges broken through; the stiles carried away. Then in the villages, the doors broken in; linen and bedding and all manner of articles lying in heaps, or scattered about the streets; the atmosphere was heavy, and mephitic odours exhaled from

the houses. The inhabitants were already occupied, some in clearing away the filth, others in repairing their doors in the best way they could; whilst some, their arms crossed upon their breasts, lamented in concert. As the travellers drove along, hands were extended from all sides into the carriage to implore alms.

With such images now before their eyes, now in their thoughts, and with the pleasant anticipation of finding the same thing at home, they at length arrived there, and found what they expected.

Agnese had the packages placed in a corner of the little court, which had remained the cleanest place about the house; she then set about cleaning, collecting together and washing the few effects they had left her. She sent for a carpenter and locksmith to repair the most serious damage; and then unpacking the linen which the Unknown had given her, and counting in secret her scudi, she exclaimed to herself, "I have fallen on my feet. Thanks be to God, the Madonna, and this good Signor, I can indeed say I have fallen on my feet!"

Don Abbondio and Perpetua entered their abode without the aid of keys. At each step they smelt an odour, a poison, a very pest, which almost drove them back. However, holding their noses, they approached the kitchen; they entered it on tip-toe; they looked around; nothing was entire; but in every corner they saw remains and fragments of what had been; feathers of Perpetua's fowls, rags of linen, leaves of Don Abbondio's almanacks, pieces of pots and pans, all lay strewn about. On the hearth could be discovered the traces of one great deed of plunder; the remains of extinguished brands, which shewed how they once

had been the arm of a chair, the leg of a table, the door of a cupboard, the frame of a bed, and the barrel which had held Don Abbondio's favourite wine. The rest were only charcoal and cinders; and with these the devastators had scrawled the walls over with grotesque figures, endeavouring by certain square caps, by certain shaven crowns, by certain large bands, to make them into priests, and render them as horrible and ridiculous as possible; an effect which such artists could not fail to attain.

"Ah, hogs!" exclaimed Perpetua. "Ah, thieves!" exclaimed Don Abbondio; and they both hurried out by another door which led into the garden. They breathe again—they go towards the fig-tree; but before reaching it, they perceive the earth dug up, and at once they both send forth a cry. Having arrived, they discover, to their utter dismay, instead of the dead, the tomb opened. Don Abbondio began attacking Perpetua for having ill-concealed the treasure, and you may imagine whether she remained silent; having both of them well stormed against each other, both standing with outstretched arms and fingers pointed towards the hole, they returned together grumbling towards the house.

You may be pretty certain that everywhere else they found things very much in the same case. It caused I do not know how much trouble to clear and purify the house, all the more as just then it was difficult to get help. For a long time were they obliged to live like people in a camp, managing as well as they could, and renewing by degrees the doors, the furniture, and the household utensils, with money lent by Agnese.

This disaster was for a long time an inexhaustible subject of contention. Perpetua, by force of much questioning and research, succeeded in assuring herself that some of her master's furniture, which they had imagined fallen a prey to the soldiers, was, on the contrary, safe and sound in some of the peasants' houses; and she tormented her master that he should make his claims heard, and demand his own. A more unpleasant chord for Don Abbondio, however, could not have been touched, since if his property were in the hands of thieves, these thieves were the very people he most desired to live in peace with.

"But if I don't want to know anything of these affairs?" said he. "How many times must I repeat to you, that what is gone is gone? Must I get myself into trouble again, because my house has been once robbed?"

"I tell you," replied Perpetua, "that you would let the very eyes out of your head be pulled out. Other people think it a sin to steal; but you!—you seem to like it."

"But only see whether these are proper things to be said," returned Don Abbondio; "but will you be silent?"

Perpetua was silent, but not immediately; and in every thing she found a pretext for recommencing. And so often was this the case, that the poor man was at last reduced to such an extremity that he no longer dared to let the slightest complaint escape him regarding such or such a thing being missing, even when he most stood in need of it; for more than once he had been forced to hear, "Go and fetch it from such a one, who has it, and who would not have kept it

until now had he not had to do with such a good man as you are."

Still greater disquiet, however, was occasioned him by the report that straggling soldiers still continued to pass by, as he had only too well conjectured would be the case. He was always afraid lest he should see one or even a whole troop of them appear at his door, which he had caused to be repaired in the greatest haste, and which he kept closed with the greatest care. But by the grace of heaven, this misfortune did not happen. These terrors, however, had not ceased when a fresh one arrived.

Here we will leave this poor man; we have to treat of far more important events than his personal apprehensions, the woes of a few villages, or of a transient disaster.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE plague, which the Tribunal of Health had feared might enter the Milanese with the German troops, had in truth entered with them. It is also well known, that it did not confine its ravages to the Milanese states, but invaded and desolated a good part of Italy. Conducted by the thread of our narrative, we now pass on to the relation of the principal events of this great calamity, as far, at least, as it affected the Milanese, or one might add, Milan almost exclusively; for, strange to say, the memoirs of those times treat almost exclusively of the city. And in this relation, to speak the truth, our object is not alone to describe the circumstances in which our characters were placed; but also to give, as far as we can in a brief form, a relation of a passage in Italian history which is more famous than understood.

Among all the relations given by contemporary writers, there is not a single one, which in itself suffices to give the reader a clear and distinct idea of this fearful scourge. For each of these relations, not even excepting that of Ripamonti,* which is far superior to all the rest, both from its length, from his selection of facts, and still more from his mode of

* Josephi Ripamontii, canonici scalensis, chronistæ urbis Mediolani, de peste quæ fuit anno 1630, libri v. *Mediolani*, 1640, apud Malatestas.—(*Author's note*).

observation; in every one of these relations, I say, are omitted essential facts, which fortunately, however, are to be found registered in others; in all are material errors, which may be recognised and rectified by the aid of some other, or by the few public edicts which yet remain. Through all these reigns a strange confusion both regarding times and events; there is a continual hastening from one circumstance to another, a want of a general design and of a clear arrangement of ideas. Strange to say, no writer of a later age has proposed to himself the examination and collation of these memoirs, so as to compile a connected series of events, a concise history of this plague. No wonder is it therefore, that the generally received idea of it should be somewhat confused; an idea but ill-defined, of the great evils and the great errors of those times (and to say the truth, both one and the other are almost beyond the power of imagination), an idea more founded upon judgments than upon facts. We, examining and collating with much diligence, if with nothing else, all the printed relations, more than one unedited one, and many official documents, have sought to draw up, not exactly such an account as might be wished, but something more than has yet been done. We have only endeavoured to signalize and verify the general and most important facts, to dispose them in the real order of their succession as far as reason and their nature will permit, to observe their mutual operation, and, in short, give a brief, but sincere and continuous, statement of this public disaster.

Throughout the whole length of country traversed by the army had various corpses been found in the

houses, and some upon the road. Shortly after, in this and in that village, people began to fall sick and die; single individuals, whole families, attacked by violent and strange pains, attended by symptoms unknown to the greater part of the survivors. Only a few old people remembered to have seen them before; and these few were those who had witnessed the plague which three and fifty years previous had desolated a good part of Italy, and especially the Milanese, where it was called and even still bears the name of San Carlo's plague. How powerful is the influence of charity and love! Amidst the various and solemn memories of a general calamity, it can cause the name of a single man to stand pre-eminent, for it has inspired this man with sentiments and actions even more memorable than these very evils; imprint this name in the hearts of thousands, as an epitome of all these woes, for it has caused him to appear as guide, benefactor, a living example, a voluntary victim; has made a public calamity for this man a glorious enterprise, and bestowed his name upon this misery, as though it were a conquest or a discovery!

The first physician, Lodovico Settala, who had not only seen this plague, but who had, spite of his extreme youth, been one of the most active and intrepid of the medical attendants, now having his suspicions excited, made vigorous inquiries; and, on the 20th of October, informed the Tribunal of Health, that in the district of Chiuso (the last district in the territory of Lecco, and adjoining the Bergamascan frontier), the contagion had indubitably shewn itself. According to Tadino, not one single resolution was formed upon the announcement of this danger.

Immediately similar intelligence arrived from Lecco and Bellano. Upon this the Tribunal deliberated, and contented themselves by despatching a commissary, who, pursuing his route, should procure a medical man at Como, and carry him along with him to visit the various places indicated. Both of these, "either through ignorance or something else, allowed themselves to be persuaded by an ignorant old barber of Bellano, that this manner of sickness did not belong to the plague;"* but was in some places caused by the autumnal exhalations from the marshes, in others by the misery and deprivations endured by the inhabitants during the march of the German troops. His assurance, reported to the Tribunal, appears to have set their minds at ease.

But fresh and unceasing accounts of death in various quarters constantly arriving, two delegates were again sent forth to examine and take the necessary precautions; these were Tadino and another member of the Tribunal. When they arrived, the evil had propagated itself so fast, that examples presented themselves without their having the trouble of searching for them. They traversed the territory of Lecco, the Vallassina, the shores of the lake of Como, the districts denominated the Monte di Brianza, and the Gera d'Adda; and everywhere they found villages barricaded or utterly deserted. The inhabitants had fled, or were encamped in the fields, or dispersed; "they appeared," remarks Tadino, "so many wild creatures, every one carrying in his hand either a sprig of mint, of rue, of rosemary, or perhaps a phial of vinegar." They inquired after the number of deaths

* Tadino.

—the amount was terrific. They visited the sick and the dead; and they only too plainly discovered the signs of the pestilence. This melancholy intelligence was immediately communicated by letter to the Tribunal, who immediately upon its receipt, the 30th of October, “prepared,” says the physician Tadino, “to prescribe the warrants for closing the gates of the city upon people arriving from those villages where the contagion had manifested itself.”

Meanwhile, the delegates in all haste employed those measures which appeared to them the best; but at length returned with the sorrowful persuasion that they would not suffice to remedy or arrest the progress of an evil which was too far advanced and too broadly diffused.

Having arrived, on the 14th of November, the Tribunal ordered these commissioners to present themselves before the Governor, and explain to him the state of affairs. He replied that their communications caused him sorrow, that he was very much affected by them, but that the cares of war were much more pressing. This was the second time, if the reader remembers, that a similar reply had been returned to a similar application. Two or three days later, he published a proclamation, ordering public rejoicings to celebrate the birth of the Prince Carlo, eldest son of Philip IV., without imagining or troubling himself about the danger incurred by allowing such a vast concourse of people to assemble under the present circumstances: all was conducted as in ordinary times, and as though no fear of contagion had been entertained.

This man, as we have already said, was the cele-

brated Ambrogio Spinola, and had been sent to conduct the war to a happier issue, to repair the errors of Don Gonzalo, and incidentally to govern; and here we may recall to our readers' minds that he died a few months later, in the midst of this same war, which he had always had so much at heart; and died, not of his wounds on the field of battle, but in his bed, of vexation and anger at the reproaches, the severe remonstrances and annoyances of every kind, which he had met with from those he served. History has deplored his fate, and blamed that ingratitude to which he fell a victim; she has described with much diligence his military and political enterprises, has praised his foresight, activity, and perseverance; but she should have at the same time inquired what use he made of all these fine qualities when the plague menaced, invaded a whole population, delivered over to his care, or rather to his mercy?

But what diminishes our astonishment at his indifference, is the indifference of the people themselves, of that portion at least of the population who were not yet attacked by the contagion, but who had every reason to dread it. At the fatal intelligence which arrived from those villages which were so terribly infected with it, from villages which formed as it were a semicircle round the city, and which at some points were not distant more than eighteen or twenty miles; who would not have expected a general emotion, a desire to take every precaution, or at the very least an unproductive anxiety? And yet if the memoirs of those times agree upon one point, it is to assure us that such was not the case. The famine of the preceding year, the exactions of the military, and mental suffer-

ing, appeared in the eyes of the world causes more than sufficient for this mortality; in the public squares, in shops, in houses, he who breathed a word regarding danger, or hinted at the plague, was received with a smile of incredulity, or with a scorn mingled with anger. The same disbelief, or rather let us say, the same blindness, the same obstinacy, prevailed in the Senate, in the Council of Ten, and in every magistracy.

Cardinal Federigo, however, had scarcely received intelligence of the first cases of this contagious sickness, than he enjoined among other things in a letter addressed to his different curates, their making the people feel the urgent necessity of revealing every such death, and of consigning the infected or suspicious effects to the proper authorities; and this act also may be counted among his praiseworthy singularities.

The Tribunal of Health besought, implored co-operation, but it obtained little or none. And even in the Tribunal itself, the eagerness was very far from being equal to the urgent necessity: it was only two physicians, affirms Tadino many times, who, persuaded of the gravity of the danger, stimulated the rest of the body, who in their turn endeavoured to stimulate others.

We have already seen, upon the first announcement of the plague, how coldly the authorities commenced operation, and the search after information; here is another instance of slowness almost as preposterous, if it were not rather occasioned by obstacles raised by the superior magistrates themselves. The proclamation to prevent the entrance of strangers into the

city had been projected on the 30th of October, had not been decreed until the 23rd of the following month, and was not published until the 29th. The pest had already entered Milan.

Our historians, both one and the other, relate that it was an Italian soldier in the service of Spain, who first introduced the plague; for the rest, they are not agreed, even regarding his name. He was, according to Tadino, one Pietro Antonio Zovato, out of the territory of Lecco; according to Ripamonti, one Pier Paolo Locati, from Chiavenna. They also differ regarding the day of his entrance into Milan: the former considers it the 22d of October, the latter about a month later; but one can rely upon neither one nor the other. Both epochs are at utter variance with others which are much better authenticated. Yet Ripamonti, writing at the command of the Council of Ten, must have had many means of gaining necessary information; and Tadino, by reason of his charge, might more easily than any one else have informed himself regarding a fact of this description. Suffice it, however, to say, that upon comparing other and more exact data, we discover this happened even before the publication of the proclamation already mentioned; nay, even were it necessary, we could prove, or very nearly, that it must have been in the early days of the same month.

Let that have been as it may, this unfortunate soldier, and bearer of misfortune, entered Milan with a large bundle of clothes, bought or stolen from German soldiers; he went to lodge with some relations in the suburb of the Eastern-gate, near to the Capuchin convent; but scarcely had he arrived, when

he fell sick, and was carried to the hospital, where a plague-spot, which shewed itself below the arm-pit, excited the suspicion of his medical attendant. The fourth day he died.

The Tribunal of Health commanded the house which he had inhabited to be condemned, and his relatives to be confined within it. His clothes and the bed upon which he had died at the hospital were burned. Two servants, who had waited upon him, and a good friar who had visited him, fell ill a few days afterwards, and all three of the plague. The suspicion which had been entertained from the first in the hospital, and the precautions used in consequence, prevented the contagion from propagating itself farther there.

But the soldier had left without the hospital, seeds which were not long in germinating. The first whom it attacked was the master of the house where he had lodged, Carlo Colonna, a player on the lute. Upon this all the inhabitants of the house were conducted to the lazaretto, by command of the Tribunal of Health, where the greater number fell sick; several died in a short time, evidently of contagious disease.

The seeds which had been disseminated by these first victims, through their furniture carried away by relatives, by the landlord, by people in their service, or also at the search and burning instituted by the Tribunal, to say nothing of fresh infection brought into the city, caused the plague secretly and slowly to circulate through the population all the rest of that year, and in the first months of the following one 1630. From time to time, now in this quarter, now in another, some persons were attacked with it, and others died;

but the very rarity of these cases prevented all suspicion of the pest, and only confirmed the multitude the more in their stupid and murderous confidence that there was no such thing. Many physicians also, echoing the cry of the people, derided the gloomy omens, and threatening warnings of the few. They had always ready the names of common diseases with which to qualify every case of plague which they might be called upon to attend, whatever might be its symptoms.

Information of these cases, if it reached the ears of the Tribunal, generally arrived too late, and was for the most part very uncertain. The terror of the lazaretto sharpened all wits; the sick were concealed; the grave-diggers and their superintendents were corrupted; false certificates even were purchased from the subalterns of the Tribunal itself, who were deputed by it to inspect the dead bodies.

Yet upon every discovery which they succeeded in making, the Tribunal ordered the burning of property, the sequestration of houses, the sending of whole families into the lazaretto; therefore it is easy to infer what must have been the anger and murmurs of the people, of the nobility, of the merchants, and of the lower classes, persuaded as they all were, that these were only useless and ridiculous annoyances. The principal odium fell upon Tadino and the senator Settala, son of the head physician; and to such a height had this feeling risen in the public mind, that they could no longer traverse the public squares without being insulted, if not stoned. And certainly the condition of these men was most singular, and deserves to be mentioned; for months they saw ad-

vancing this horrible scourge, exerted themselves in every manner to avert its progress, and everywhere encountered obstacles, where they sought assistance and good-will, and were made at once the sport of the decrees, and proclaimed enemies of their country.

A portion of this odium fell also upon those other physicians who, also convinced of the reality of the contagion, suggested precautions and sought to communicate their sorrowful certainty to others. The more discreet accused them of credulity and obstinacy; for the others, all this was manifest imposture, a cabal by which to get rich upon the public fear.

The head-physician, Lodovico Settala, at that time little less than eighty years of age, who had been professor of medicine at the university of Pavia, then professor of moral philosophy at Milan, author of many works of high reputation, and who had been solicited as professor by the universities of Ingoldstadt, Pisa, Bologna, and Padova, had nearly fallen a victim to this popular fury.

One day, as he was going in his litter to visit his patients, the people began to assemble around him, crying that he was the head of those who would insist that the plague was in the city, and that it was he who caused all this alarm with his long face, and all to give the doctors something to do. The crowd and their fury continued to increase; and the bearers of the litter, perceiving how affairs stood, fled with their master to the house of one of his friends, which fortunately was near at hand. All this happened to him, because, having seen clearly the real danger incurred by the city, he had spoken boldly, and would have saved many thousands of lives; whilst, when once by

his miserable counsel he had co-operated in causing a poor unhappy girl to be tortured, pinched with hot pincers, and burnt for a sorceress, because one master with whom she lived felt strange pains in his stomach, and another former master had been desperately enamoured of her, he had only won fresh praises for wisdom from the populace, and what is intolerable to think of—a new title of merit.

But towards the end of March, at first in the suburb of the Eastern-gate, and then in other quarters of the city, illness and death, accompanied by strange spasms, palpitations, lethargy, delirium, and those sad livid plague-spots, began to be more frequent. And these deaths were mostly rapid, violent, and not rarely unexpected and unattended by any previous sign of disease. The physicians who had been opposed to the opinion of contagion, not wishing now to confess that which they had derided, and yet being forced to give a generic name to this new disease, which had become too general and too manifest longer to remain without one, fixed upon that of malignant fever, of pestilential fever—a miserable transaction this cheat of words, and one which did infinite mischief; for feigning to recognise the truth, it still prevented that from being believed which it was the most important should be both believed and seen, the fact that this disease attacked people by means of contact. The municipal authorities, like people awakened out of a profound sleep, began to pay a little more attention to the proposals of the Tribunal, and set about seeing their edicts put into execution, as well as the sequestrations and quarantines prescribed by the Tribunal. The Tribunal also besought a continuation of supplies

for the daily increasing expenses of the lazaretto, and for other uses; and it besought them of the Council of Ten, inasmuch as it was decided that such expenses should belong to the city, or the royal treasury. Moreover, the High-chancellor, at the command of the Governor, who had again departed to lay siege to this poor Casale, solicited the Council of Ten; the senate solicited that they should consider the means of victualing the city before the contagion unhappily having spread itself, they should be cut off from all intercourse with other places; and that they should also find the means of maintaining a considerable number of the population who were out of work. The Council of Ten sought to raise money by way of taxes and imposts; and of that which was raised, a little was given to the Tribunal, a little to the poor, and a little grain was purchased. But as yet, the great misery had not arrived.

In the lazaretto, where the population daily increased, there was another arduous task to be performed, and that was to insure attendance and subordination, to preserve the prescribed separation, and, in short, to maintain, or rather to establish the government ordered by the Tribunal of Health; for, from the very commencement, every thing had been in a state of confusion, through the recklessness of many of the patients, and through the negligence or connivance of the attendants. The Tribunal and Council, not knowing what was to be done, had recourse to the Capuchins. They conjured the chief commissary of the province, who supplied the place of the Father Provençal, dead a short time before, to grant them certain Fathers who might be capable of

governing this kingdom of desolation. The commissary proposed to them as principal, one Father Felice Casati, a man of mature age, who enjoyed a great fame for charity, activity, and gentleness, together with great strength of mind—a fame well merited, as the sequel will prove. Another Capuchin, Father Michele Pozzobonelli, still young, but grave and severe both in thought as well as in appearance, was assigned as his companion. These two men were accepted with great joy; on the 30th of March they entered the lazaretto. The President of the Tribunal of Health conducted them through the building, as though installing them; and having assembled the attendants and underlings of every grade, he declared the Father Felice, in presence of all, the president of that place, endowed with all authority. Gradually as the livid crowd of dying wretches increased, other Capuchins hastened thither; they became, superintendents, confessors, administrators, sick-nurses, cooks, keepers of the wardrobe, laundresses, in short, filled any office which might be required. The Father Felice, always indefatigable and always eager, paced by day and by night through the porticoes, the chambers, and the vast area, sometimes bearing a lance, sometimes undefended save by his friar's dress; he encouraged all, regulated every thing; calmed the tremulous, appeased all dissensions; menaced, punished, reprimanded, comforted, and both shed and wiped away tears. He himself took the plague in the beginning; recovered from it, and applied himself with fresh vigour to his former cares. The greater number of his brethren lost their lives, but all joyfully.

Certainly, such a system of government was a strange remedy—strange as the calamity and as the times; and even, were this all, to see men intrusted with so important a duty, obliged to resign their office, and resign it too, to men who by their station were the farthest removed from such a task, would be a sufficient argument to prove a very rude and ill-regulated state of society. But, at the same time, the spectacle of these men so bravely undertaking such a charge is no ignoble example of the strength and power which charity can bestow in all times and under all circumstances. And it was indeed beautiful, their having accepted it from the simple reason that there was no one else who would, without any other object than that of serving, with no other hope in this world than that of a death much more enviable than envied; it was beautiful, their having offered themselves solely because it was so difficult and dangerous an undertaking; and from this it is to be inferred that they possessed energy and presence of mind, qualities then so necessary and so rare. The deeds and the hearts of these friars deserve to be remembered with admiration, with tenderness, and with that species of gratitude which is due towards great services rendered by men to their brothers, and all the more due towards such as do not expect it as a recompense. According to Ripamonti, the persons who were received into the lazaretto during the seven months Father Felice was its governor, were about fifty thousand; he also says, with reason, that had he been relating things which would do honour to the city, instead of its misfortunes, he ought to have been equally express in his mention of such a man.

Even among the people, the obstinate denial of the plague naturally died away as the disease gradually diffused itself by means of contact and intercourse, and yet more when, having been confined solely to the lower orders, it began to attack individuals of greater notoriety. And among these, as being the most memorable instance of all, we must make especial mention of the physician Settala. Did the people then confess that the poor old man had spoken with reason? Who can tell? He fell ill of the plague, he, his wife, two sons, and seven members of his household. He and his sons recovered: the others died. "These cases," says Tadino, "having occurred in the city, in the houses of the nobility, caused both the nobles and the people to reflect, and both the incredulous physicians, and the ignorant and rash mob, began to press their lips together, to close their teeth, and to arch their brows."

Being no longer able to deny the terrible effects of the disease, yet not wishing to recognise the true cause, for that would have been confessing themselves at once guilty of a great error and a great fault, the incredulous party imagined another one, entirely in character with the prejudices of the times. Unfortunately this cause was only too easily to be found in the ideas and generally received traditions, not only of Italy, but of the whole of Europe, in the belief that there existed magical arts, diabolical operations, and people leagued together to spread the plague by means of contagious poisons and sorcery. Already the same and similar things had been supposed and believed in many other pestilences, and especially in the one of the previous century. Besides which,

towards the close of the preceding year, a despatch, bearing the signature of the king Philip IV., had been received by the Governor, informing him that there had escaped from Madrid four Frenchmen, suspected of having spread abroad poisonous and pestilential substances; and that he should be on his guard, if these individuals should ever arrive in Milan. The Governor had communicated this despatch to the Senate and the Tribunal of Health; but it does not appear that at the time much attention was paid to it. However, when the plague had really broken out and was recognised by every one, this communication recurring to the public mind, might serve to confirm the vague suspicion of a criminal fraud; it might even be the origin of the suspicion itself.

But two incidents, one occasioned by blind and unrestrained fear, the other by I know not what wicked design, converted this undefined suspicion of a possible attempt into a belief, and with many people into the certainty, of an actual attempt and a real plot. Some individuals, who imagined they had seen on the evening of the 17th of May, certain persons in the cathedral occupied in anointing a wooden partition, which served as a division to the spaces assigned to the two sexes, caused, during the night, this partition and a quantity of benches to be carried out of the church. The President of the Tribunal of Health hastened, with four members of the Tribunal, to inspect the partition, the benches, and the cisterns of holy water; he discovered nothing which could confirm the ignorant suspicion of such a diabolical plot; yet to gratify the public frenzy, and *rather through an excess of precaution than from any*

necessity, he decreed that the partition should be washed. This vast quantity of woodwork, all heaped up together, excited a great sentiment of terror in the minds of the multitude, with whom an object so easily becomes an argument. It was generally said and believed, that the anointers had smeared all the benches and the walls of the cathedral—nay, even the very ropes of the bells. It was not alone the vulgar belief, but all contemporary writers, and even some of later years who mention this fact, speak of it with equal certainty; and we should have been left to guess at the true nature of the history, had not the explanation been found in a letter from the Tribunal addressed to the Governor—a letter which is preserved in the archives called those of San Fedele; it is from this letter we have drawn our view of the subject, and from this letter we have taken the words printed in italics.

The following morning, a new spectacle, still more strange and significant, presented itself to the eyes and imaginations of the citizens. In all parts of the city were seen the doors and walls of the houses smeared with long streaks of I know not what manner of filth, of a whitish yellow colour, which seemed to have been applied with a sponge. Whether this was merely a wicked joke played off to excite a still more general terror, or whether it was done with the more criminal design of augmenting the public disorder, or let the motive have been what it may, the circumstance is so well attested, that it would appear less reasonable to attribute it to the dreams of a many, than to the acts of a few; a circumstance, in short, which would have been neither the first nor the last

of its kind. Ripamonti, who when speaking of the anointers, often derides, and still oftener deplores, the popular credulity, affirms that he has seen this smearing, and describes it: *et nos quoque ivimus visere. Maculae erant sparsim inæqualiterque manantes, veluti si quis haustam spongia saniem adpersisset, imperessissetre parieti: et januæ passim, ostiaque ædium eadem adspergine contaminata cernebantur*, p. 75. In the above quoted letter, the Signors of the Tribunal of Health relate the fact in the same terms; they speak of examinations, of experiments which had been tried with this material upon dogs, from which no bad effects had resulted; adding, that it is their opinion, *that such an act of temerity rather proceeded from insolence than from any evil intent*: a thought which indicates that until that time they had preserved sufficient calmness to prevent them from seeing what did not exist. The other contemporary writers, in relating the event, also hint that, at first, many people were of opinion that it had been an act of pleasantry or folly; yet not one writer speaks of a single individual who denied the fact—and most certainly they would have spoken of such had they existed—were it only to have called them ridiculous unbelievers. I have considered it not unreasonable thus to refer to and collect these particulars regarding so celebrated a delirium, particulars so little known or so entirely forgotten; for it appears to me in errors, and especially in the errors of the multitude, that what is most interesting and most instructive is the course which they have taken, their appearance, and the means by which they have been able to enter and govern the minds of men.

The city already excited was now seriously alarmed;

the masters of the houses were seen with burning straw purifying the anointed places; the passers-by stopped, gazed, and shuddered with horror. Strangers who were merely suspicious because they were *strangers*, and who were easily recognised by their apparel, were arrested in the streets by the populace and conducted to justice. There were examinations of the arrested, of the arrestors, and of witnesses; but no criminal was discovered: the public mind was still able to doubt, to examine, and to understand. The Tribunal of Health published a proclamation in which a reward and impunity were offered to whosoever should bring to light the author or the authors of this deed. *In nowise it appearing decent, say the Signors in the letter which we have already quoted, bearing date the 21st of May, but which was evidently written on the 19th, the day given in the printed edict, that this crime should remain unpunished, especially in times of so much danger and suspicion; and for the consolation and quiet of the people, and to obtain information, we have this day published a proclamation, etc.* In the proclamation itself, however, there appears no sign, or at least no clear one, of the reasonable and pacifying conjecture which they imparted to the Governor; a silence which at once accuses the people of a mad obstinacy, and then of a condescension all the more blameable as it was pernicious.

Whilst the Tribunal sought after the cause, the public imagined that they had already discovered it. Among those who believed in a poisonous anointing, some considered this a deed of vengeance perpetrated by Don Gonzalo Fernandez de Cordova, for the insults received upon his departure; others, a scheme of Car-

dinal Richelieu, to depopulate Milan, and thus render himself master of the city without any trouble; others, and from what reason one cannot tell, maintained that its author was Collalto; others, Wallenstein; others, certain Milanese gentlemen. There were not, however, wanting, as we have already observed, those who only saw in this deed a foolish joke, and who attributed it to certain students and gentlemen, or to officers who were annoyed at the siege of Casale. But when it was observed that the infection and universal mortality which had been foreboded, did not immediately follow, it is probable that the first terror was calmed, and thus the circumstance had, or at least appeared to have, passed into oblivion.

Beside, a certain number of people still remained unpersuaded of the real existence of the plague. And because sometimes in the lazaretto, as well as in the city, a few recovered (the last arguments put forth to support an opinion which is thoroughly confuted by evidence are always curious), "it was said by the people, and even by a certain number of obstinate physicians, that this was not the true plague, otherwise all would have died."* To remove every doubt, the Tribunal of Health discovered an expedient proportionate to the necessity, a mode of speaking to the eyes of the multitude, which the times might perhaps have demanded, or might even perhaps have suggested. Upon a certain day, during the Feast of Pentecost, the citizens were accustomed to repair to the cemetery of San Gregorio, situated without the Eastern-gate, to pray for those who had died during the former pestilence, and who were interred there; and, making this

* Tadino.

act of devotion an occasion for display and diversion, they went, every one arrayed in his gayest attire. There had died that very day of the plague, besides many others, an entire family. In the hour when the concourse was the greatest, in the midst of the carriages, of the people on horseback, and on foot, the corpses of this family were, by order of the Senate, conducted to the cemetery, naked in a cart, in order that in them the crowds might behold the manifest signs of the pestilence. A cry of disgust and horror rose wherever this cart passed along; a long murmur was heard when it had passed, another murmur preceded it. The plague was more generally believed, but it continued daily acquiring for itself belief; and this very concourse itself must have contributed no little to its propagation.

Thus, in the commencement there was no plague, absolutely none whatsoever—the very word even was prohibited. Then it was a pestilential fever; the idea was admitted, only changing the noun into an adjective. It was not the true plague; that is to say, it was the plague, but only in a certain sense; it was not the regular plague, but something for which no other name could be found. Finally, it was the plague, without the slightest doubt or dispute; but already another idea seized upon the public mind, the idea of poison and sorcery, which changed and confounded the express idea of that word which could no longer be kept behind.

It is not necessary to be deeply versed in the history of ideas and words, to perceive that many have taken a similar course. But, by the grace of heaven, there are not many of a similar nature and

of an equal importance, not many which have conquered their evidence at such a fearful price, and which have been followed by such fatal consequences. It would, however, be possible, as well in small things as in great, to avoid in a considerable degree the long and crooked path, by adopting the method proposed so long ago, that of observing, listening, comparing, and reflecting, before speaking.

But this one thing, *speaking*, is in itself so much easier than the others, that we, I say, we, men in general, are a little to be pardoned.

CHAPTER XXXII.

IT becoming ever more difficult to raise funds wherewith to meet the painful exigencies of existing circumstances, it was, on the 4th of May, resolved by the Council of Ten, to apply for aid to the Governor. And on the 22d there were despatched to the camp two members of the Council, who should represent to him the misery and distress of the city, the enormous expenses, and the exhausted state of the treasury; informing him, at the same time, how the revenue of future years was already engaged; and that the current taxes were unpaid, owing to the general misery produced by so many causes, especially by the spoils of the military. They also reminded him that, by an uninterrupted succession of laws and by a special decree of Charles V., the expenses of the plague should be defrayed by the government. During the plague of 1576, the Governor, the Marquis d'Ayramonte, not only suspended all taxes, but presented the city with a subsidy of forty thousand scudi; and, finally, these deputies should demand four things from the Governor: that taxation should be suspended, as upon the former occasion; that the government should provide necessary funds; that he, the Governor, should inform the King of the misery endured both by the city and province; and that he should henceforth quarter no more soldiers in the country, already desolated by military lawlessness. The Governor

wrote in reply condolences and fresh exhortations; it grieved him that he was unable to be himself in the city, so as to employ all his thoughts for its relief; but he trusted that the zeal of these Signors would have supplied every want; and lastly, that this was the time to spend freely and to exert every nerve. Other messages had the same result. Later, in the very height of the plague, the Governor judged it expedient to transfer, by letters patent, his authority to Ferrer, having, he writes, to bestow all his attention upon the war. And this same war, it may be here incidentally remarked, having swept away (without mentioning the mere soldiers) a million of people by means of the contagion, to speak within bounds, in Lombardy, in the Venetian States, in Piedmont, in Tuscany, and in a considerable portion of Romagna; after having desolated, as we have seen, the whole country over which it passed; and after the seizure and atrocious sacking of Mantua, ended by all parties acknowledging the new Duke, to exclude whom the war had been undertaken.

Together with this resolution, the Council of Ten had formed another; and this was to request the Cardinal Archbishop to allow the body of San Carlo to be carried through the city in a solemn procession.

This the good prelate refused; and from many reasons. This faith in an arbitrary means displeased him, and he feared lest, the effect failing to correspond with their expectations, which he also feared might be the case, this very faith might change itself into scandal. He feared still more that, *if these anointers really existed*, this procession would be only too favourable an occasion for the perpetration of their

crime; and that, *even were there none*, the assembling together of so many people would only spread the contagion—a much more real danger. The suspicion regarding the anointers had in the mean time again awoke, and was more general and furious than ever.

Once more people had seen, or this time fancied they saw, the doors of public edifices and private houses—nay, even the very knockers anointed. The news of such discoveries flew from mouth to mouth, and, as most generally happens when minds are pre-occupied, hearing produced the effect of seeing. The public mind evermore embittered by the presence of evil, and irritated by the imminence of the danger, embraced still more willingly this belief in the anointers; for, observes a clever man, when speaking of this very circumstance,* it is more agreeable to attribute evil to human wickedness against which you can vent your anger and vengeance, than to recognise in it a cause which leaves you only the possibility of resignation. The idea of a subtle, instantaneous, penetrating poison, more than sufficed to explain the violence, and all the obscure and extraordinary symptoms, attending the disease. This poison was said to be composed of toads, of serpents, of the froth and matter of people seized with the plague, and even worse; of all that, in short, which the wildest and most extravagant imaginations considered the most foul and loathsome. To this was added the belief in magic, by means of which every effect became possible, every objection lost its weight, every difficulty was removed. If the dreaded effects did not immediately follow the first attempt, the cause was easily divined; it had

* P. Verri, in his *Observations upon Torture*.

been made when the anointers were yet novices; now the art had been perfected, and the perpetrators were more than ever confirmed in their diabolical intent. If any one had now dared to maintain that this had been merely a pleasantry, if he had denied the existence of a plot, he would have passed for blind or obstinate; even if he chanced to escape the suspicion of being a man interested in diverting the public attention from the truth, of being an accomplice, or an anointer: this word soon conveyed a most solemn and tremendous signification. Thus fully persuaded of the existence of anointers, the multitude must infallibly discover some: all eyes were on the watch—the slightest action might cause suspicion; suspicion easily became certainty, certainty fury.

In proof of this, Ripamonti adduces two facts, informing us that he has not selected them as being the most atrocious, but because he himself was witness to both one and the other.

In the church of *Sant' Antonio*, upon the celebration of what solemnity I know not, an old man of more than eighty years of age, after having prayed some time upon his knees, wished to sit down; before doing which, he dusted the bench with his cloak. "That old man is anointing the benches!" cried in one voice several women who witnessed this action. The people who were in the church—in the church!—fell upon the old man; they seized him by the hair, hoary as it was; they assailed him with kicks and blows; some pulled him along, others pushed him forward; if they did not put an end to his existence at once, it was only to drag him thus half dead to prison, to his judges, to torture. "I saw him whilst

they were thus dragging him along," says Ripamonti, "and I know nothing more regarding him; but I fully believe that he could not have survived more than a few moments."

The other case (and this occurred the following day) was equally strange, but not equally fatal. Three young Frenchmen—a man of letters, a painter, and a mechanic, who had come to Italy to study its antiquities as well as to seek some means of gaining a livelihood, approached the exterior of the Cathedral, and stood attentively observing it. A passer-by saw them and paused, he pointed them out to others who arrived; a circle was formed around them, so as to observe them and to watch their every action; for their garb, the way in which they wore their hair, and their wallets, accused them of being foreigners, and what was much worse—of being French. As though to ascertain that the fabric was of marble, they stretched forth their hands. That was sufficient. They were immediately surrounded, arrested, ill-treated, and driven along with blows to prison. Fortunately, the Hall of Justice is but a short distance from the Cathedral; and still more fortunately they were found to be innocent and released.

Neither did such things occur solely in the city; the frenzy had been propagated with the contagion. The traveller who by peasants was met with out of the direct road, or who, even in the high road, slackened his pace, or who had thrown himself down to rest; and the unknown, in whom something strange was observable, something suspicious in his countenance or dress, were pronounced anointers: at the first intelligence, given by whomsoever it might be,

or at the cry of a child, the alarm-bell was rung, and people rushed to the spot; the poor unfortunates were assailed with stones, or seized and conducted with violence to prison. And the prison was, for a certain time, a haven of safety.

The Council of Ten undismayed by the wise prelate's refusal, redoubled their solicitations, which were loudly seconded by the public voice. Federigo still resisted some time, and sought to dissuade them. This was all that the wisdom of one man was able to effect when opposed by the spirit of the times and the obstinacy of the many. However, upon their solicitation being again repeated, he yielded, consenting that the procession should take place, and furthermore, at the general desire, consenting that the case in which were inclosed the relics of San Carlo should afterwards remain eight days exposed upon the high altar of the Cathedral.

It does not appear that either the Tribunal of Health, or any one, in fact, made the slightest remonstrance or opposition. The Tribunal only prescribed certain precautions which, without obviating the danger, indicated their fear. It prescribed still severer rules to prevent the entrance of strangers into the city; and to insure their execution, the city gates were ordered to be closed; and in order to remove those who were infected with the disease as far as possible from this vast assemblage of people, the doors of all condemned houses were nailed up, which, as far as the simple assertion of a writer of those times is to be believed, already amounted to about five hundred.

Three days were spent in making preparations; the 11th of June, which was the day appointed, the pro-

cession issued forth from the Cathedral with the earliest dawn. A long line of people, the greater part women, their faces covered with silken masks, many barefoot, and clothed in sackcloth, went first. Next came the trades preceded by their banners, then followed the different confraternities in habits of various forms and colours, then the brotherhoods, and after them the secular clergy, each one wearing the insignia of his rank, and with a lighted taper or small torch in his hand. In the very centre, amidst the brilliant glare of the torches, amidst the loud chanting of canticles, under a rich canopy, advanced the case, borne by four sumptuously arrayed canons, who were every now and then relieved by four others. Through the clear crystal might be discerned the venerable corpse, clothed in his splendid pontifical robes, his head adorned with a mitre; and in these mutilated and changed features might still be distinguished some vestage of his old appearance, such as his portraits represented him as having, and such as some few remembered to have seen and honoured in him when living. Behind the remains of the holy prelate (says Ripamonti, from whom we principally borrow this relation), and resembling him in merit, birth, and dignity, as well as in person, followed the Archbishop Federigo. Then came the remaining portion of the clergy, the magistrates attired in their robes of highest ceremony; and then the nobles, some magnificently arrayed, as though to do honour to the solemnity of the occasion; others, in garments of mourning, with bare feet, or dressed in sackcloth, their faces concealed by a hood,—all bore torches. The whole procession was brought up by a vast and mixed assemblage of people.

All the street was festally adorned; the rich had brought forth their most valuable furniture, and the fronts of the dwellings of the poor had been decorated by wealthy neighbours, or at public expense. Here in place of tapestry, and there displayed above the tapestry itself, were green boughs; on every side were suspended pictures, inscriptions, and devices; in the balconies were exhibited vases, rich antiques, and various valuables,—everywhere burning tapers. At many of these windows appeared the sequestered sick gazing down upon the procession, and accompanying it with their prayers. The other streets were silent and deserted; only here and there, persons listened at the windows to the moving sound; others, and amongst these might certain nuns be observed, had ascended to the roofs, in order, if possible, to see from afar this case, this train, or something in short.

The procession passed through all quarters of the city; it made a halt in each of the small squares, where the principal streets open into the suburbs, and which still bore the old name of *carrobi*, a name now only retained by one. The case was then placed near the little cross which had been raised in each square by San Carlo, during the previous plague; some of these crosses are yet standing. The procession, proceeding after this manner, returned to the Cathedral a little after mid-day.

But behold! the next day, whilst this presumptuous faith was reigning in all minds, and in many a fanatical assurance that the procession must have put an end to the plague, the number of deaths increased in all classes, and in all parts of the city, in such a frightful and sudden manner, that no one could fail

to confess that the cause was the procession itself. Yet (astonishing and deplorable power of prejudice!) the greater number did not attribute this effect to the assembling of such an immense concourse of people for so long a time, or to the increase of fortuitous contact; but to the facility afforded to the poisoners for the execution of their diabolical designs. It was said, that mixing with the crowd, they had infected with their poison as many persons as came in their way. But as this did not appear a sufficient explanation for so great a mortality among all classes of persons, and as no eye, even rendered keen by suspicion, had been able to detect any trace of suspicious matter or strange substance on the walls, or anywhere else, people had recourse to another invention, which was generally accredited in Europe—magical and poisoned powders! It was asserted that these powders strewn profusely on the way, and especially at the halting-places, had attached themselves to the trailing garments, or even more readily to the soles of the feet, for a great number had that day gone barefoot. “Thus is seen,” remarks a contemporary writer, “how the same day of the procession, piety contended with impiety, perfidy with sincerity, loss with gain.” It was, in fact, poor human reason contending with phantoms of its own creation.

From this day, the violence of the contagion continued ever on the increase: in a short time there scarcely remained a single house which was not infected. Soon the number of patients in the lazaretto amounted from two to twelve thousand; later even, upon the authority of almost all the contem-

porary historians, we may say it increased to sixteen thousand. On the 4th of July, we find by a letter addressed by the Tribunal to the Governor, that the daily mortality exceeded five hundred; and during the height of the plague, according to the general calculation, it even exceeded twelve or fifteen hundred; nay, if we should believe Tadino, it amounted to about three thousand five hundred. The same author also affirms that, after the plague, the population was found to be reduced to but little more than sixty-four thousand souls, whilst previously it had been considered above two hundred and fifty thousand.

We may imagine the anguish of the Council of Ten, upon whom rested the burden of providing for the public necessities, and of repairing all that could be repaired in such a disaster. Every day were they obliged to augment the number of the three classes of public officers; *monatti*, *apparitori*, and commissaries. The first class was devoted to the most painful and perilous employment in times of contagion, that of removing the dead bodies from the houses, the streets, and the lazaretto, bearing them away in carts to the ditches, and there burying them; besides this, they had to carry or conduct the sick to the lazaretto, and to burn or purify infected or suspected property. Ripamonti derives their appellation from the Greek *monos*; Gaspare Bugatti (in a description of the previous plague) from the Latin *monere*, but at the same time suggests with more reason that it may be a German word, most of these men coming out of Switzerland or the Grisons; and, in fact, it would not be absurd to believe it an abbreviation of the word *monatlich* (monthly); since, from uncertainty

regarding the duration of the contagion, it is probable that they were only engaged from month to month. The duty of *apparatori* was to precede the carts, warning by the ringing of a small bell the passers-by to retire. The commissaries presided over both classes, and were under the immediate direction of the Tribunal of Health.

It was necessary also to furnish the lazaretto with physicians, surgeons, medicine, food, and all the other requisites of an infirmary; it was also necessary to provide fresh accommodation for the sick who were arriving every day. To supply this want, cabins of wood and straw were hastily constructed within the enclosure of the lazaretto; a second lazaretto was also constructed of cabins, surrounded by a simple outer wall of planks, and capable of containing four thousand patients. And these not sufficing, the erection of two others was decreed. They were commenced, but means of all kind failing, they remained uncompleted. Means, people, and courage, diminished in proportion as the necessity for them increased.

Not only did many projects and orders remain unexecuted, but it was scarcely possible even by words to provide for many necessities which were only too evident. Every day, for example, a number of infants, whose mothers had died in the plague, perished from want. The Tribunal of Health proposed to found an asylum for these poor little victims, and for women about to give birth to others; but they could obtain no assistance. All aid was for the soldiery; because, remarked the Governor, during time of war, soldiers must be well treated.

Meanwhile, the immense ditch which had been

dug near the lazaretto, was filled to overflowing with dead bodies; innumerable corpses remained without sepulture, for both the ground and the hands were wanting for the work. Without some extraordinary assistance this calamity would have remained unremedied. The President of the Tribunal addressed himself, all in tears, to the two intrepid Friars who governed the lazaretto. The Father Felice engaged to clear the city in four days of the dead bodies, and to dig, within a week, ditches sufficient not only for the present moment, but even for the future. Followed by an accompanying Friar and public officers chosen by the President, he went to procure peasants from the country; and partly by the authority of the Tribunal, partly by the authority of his habit and words, he succeeded in assembling about two hundred, whom he despatched to dig pits in three different places. He then sent forth *monatti* from the lazaretto to collect the dead. At the appointed day his promise was fulfilled.

Once the lazaretto was without physicians; it was only after a deal of trouble, after a deal of time, and after great offers of money and honours, that any could be prevailed upon to attend; but the number was always less than the necessity required. Often the supplies of provisions failed, and sometimes the distress was so great that it was even feared that the patients might die of hunger; and more than once, whilst the good fathers were in despair to know where to procure supplies, assistance arrived in the shape of unexpected gifts of private charity. Amidst the general stupor and indifference which was felt for the sufferings of others, an indifference which in-

creased the fear for self, were still found certain pious souls always overflowing with charity, or others in whom this virtue sprang forth upon the loss of every earthly joy. Thus also, amidst the destruction and flight of so many men intrusted with the duty of watching over and providing for the public safety, others were seen who, always strong in body and firm of courage, remained faithful to their posts; some even, influenced by piety, took upon themselves and sustained cares to which their immediate duty did not call them.

But above all was the most entire and spontaneous devotion conspicuous among the clergy. In the lazarettos in the city, their assistance was never wanting; they were to be found wherever there was suffering, always mingling with the sick and the dying; often sick and dying themselves. Together with spiritual, they bestowed as far as lay in their power temporal succour; they fulfilled whatever services the occasion might require. More than sixty curates died within the city itself, attacked by the contagion; about eight out of every nine.

Federigo, as one might expect from him, was for all an encouragement and example. After having seen his household perish around him, and being solicited by the first magistrates and by the neighbouring princes to fly the peril, he rejected their counsel and solicitations with the same courage which had dictated the following words addressed to the curates of his diocese:—"Be disposed to abandon this mortal life, rather than these unfortunates who are our children and our family; go forth with joy to meet the pest as you would to meet a reward, as

you would to gain immortal life, since by these means you may win many souls to Christ."* He neglected none of those precautions which were compatible with his duties, he also prescribed certain rules—instructions for the clergy; but he did not trouble himself; he did not even appear to perceive the danger, when it was necessary for him to incur it during the fulfilment of his duty. Without mentioning the ecclesiastics, among whom he was always praising or directing their zeal, exciting such as applied themselves coldly to the work, or despatching others to posts where their predecessors had perished, he gave a free audience to all who might desire it. He visited in person the lazaretto, consoling the sick, and animating the attendants; he traversed the city, bearing succour to the miserable wretches sequestered in their houses, pausing at their door or under their windows to listen to their complaints, and giving them in exchange words of consolation and courage. In short, he lived in the very midst of the contagion, and when it had ceased, was astonished himself to have escaped unattacked by it.

In great public calamities, or when for a season public order is overthrown, we often behold an exhibition of the sublimest virtue; but at the same time we perceive a much greater increase of general depravity. In the present instance, this was most especially the case. The scoundrels whom the plague had spared, and did not even intimidate, found in the general confusion and the impotence of every species of public authority fresh occasions for activity, and at once fresh security and impunity; and even the exer-

* Ripamonti.

cise of public authority in great part passed into the hands of the very worst individuals of this class. Generally none but men over whom the attractions of rapine and licence possessed more influence than the terror of the pestilence, were found to fill the offices of *monatti* and *apparitori*. The strictest rules had been prescribed for their conduct, the severest punishment intimated, and their different parts had been assigned them; they had also been placed under the superintendence of commissaries. Over both one and the other were placed delegates, as we have already said, both magistrates and nobles, with full authority to act upon every occasion as might seem best to them. All these arrangements were observed during a certain time; but the great mortality, the general desolation, the terror and despair, increasing each day, the lawless found themselves freed from every restraint, and constituted themselves (the *monatti* especially) arbiters in every thing. They entered the houses like masters—like enemies; and not to speak of their robberies, of the dreadful treatment experienced by those unfortunates who were condemned by the plague to pass through their hands, they laid their infected and criminal hands upon persons in health, upon children, parents, husbands and wives, threatening to drag them to the lazaretto, if they did not ransom themselves, or prevail upon others to ransom them with money. At other times they would persist in being paid for their services, refusing to remove corpses already in a state of putrefaction for less than such or such a sum. It was said, and even affirmed by Tadino, that they designedly let fall from the carts infected clothing, in order to pro-

pagate and preserve the pestilence which was become for them a fortune, a festival, an empire. Other wretches, feigning to be *monatti*, fastened, as was prescribed to this class as a distinctive sign and warning of their approach, a little bell to one foot, and thus introduced themselves into houses to commit what crimes they chose. Thieves entered such houses as stood empty, deserted, or inhabited by some miserable dying being, and pillaged without fear; others were surprised by constables, who drove them away, and then did the same, or even worse.

In the same degree as vice, did folly also increase. All the errors, already more or less dominant, gaining through this confusion and general excitement an extraordinary strength, produced the most speedy and terrible consequences. All served to increase the ridiculous belief in the poisoners; and the idea of this fantastic danger beset and tormented the public mind far more than the real and present danger.

“And whilst,” remarks Ripamonti, “whilst the dead bodies, or heaps of dead bodies always under the eyes, and encumbering the path of the living, turned the whole city into one vast tomb, there yet remained something still more melancholy and hideous—reciprocal distrust and extravagant suspicion! Not only was suspicion excited against the neighbour, the friend, the host—but the tender names, the ties of human love, husband and wife, father and son, brother and sister, became objects of mutual terror; and, horrible to relate! the domestic board and the nuptial bed were regarded as snares where lurked the infection.

At first, it had only been believed that these sup-

posed poisonous anointers had been moved by ambition or cupidity; this frenzy increasing, it was imagined that there was an indescribable diabolical pleasure in this crime—an attraction which entirely overpowered the will. The ravings of the sick, who accused themselves of that which they had dreaded in others, appeared so many revelations, and rendered all things credible. And even stronger evidence than words must have been the actions of those who in their delirium imagined that they were anointers; a circumstance which was very likely to happen, and one which in some manner explains the general belief and the testimonies of so many historians. It was thus that, during the long and melancholy period of trials for witchcraft, the spontaneous confessions of the accused contributed no little to promote and maintain the belief in sorcery; for when any opinion has obtained a hold on the human mind, it expresses itself in all possible ways; and it is very difficult for all the world to believe that a certain thing is done without some one imagining that the thing is done by him.

Among the various stories which this frenzied belief in the poisoners gave rise to, there is one especially which deserves notice, both from the credit attached to it, and from its being so extensively circulated.

It is related, not however precisely in the same manner by all the narrators (for unanimity is not the peculiar characteristic of romancers), that upon a certain day a certain citizen had seen an equipage with six horses arrive in the Cathedral-square. Within, attended by a numerous suite, sate a personage of a noble and majestic carriage, but whose complexion

was dark and bronzed, whose eyes were inflamed, whose hair stood an end, whose lips were contracted and menacing. Whilst the citizen stopped to gaze, the carriage halted, the coachman invited him to get in, and he felt himself unable to resist the invitation. After a short time the equipage paused, and they dismounted at the gates of a certain palace. The citizen entered with his companions, and saw mingled scenes of delight and horror, frightful deserts and joyous gardens, gloomy caverns and magnificent saloons. Phantoms were here assembled in council. He was shewn immense chests full of money, and was informed that he might carry away with him as much of their contents as he chose, provided that he accepted at the same time a small vase of poison, promising to anoint the whole city with it. He however refused, and in the twinkling of an eye found himself on the precise spot from whence he had been taken. This story, generally believed by the people, and which, according to Ripamonti, was not sufficiently derided by certain men of authority, circulated through the whole of Italy, and even beyond. An engraving was made of it in Germany; the Elector, archbishop of Mayence, wrote to the Cardinal Federigo, asking him what credence might be attached to the wonderful things related about Milan. He heard, in reply, that they were mere foolish dreams.

The dreams of the learned were of equal value, although they were of a different nature; and their effects were not less disastrous. The greater part saw at once the announcement and cause of these calamities in a comet which appeared in 1628, and in a conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter. A prophecy

also, which was said to be taken out of a book entitled *Speechio degli Almanacchi perfetti*—The Mirror of complete Almanacs, printed at Milan in 1623—was in all mouths. Another comet, appearing in June in the very year of the plague, was also regarded as a fresh warning, as well as a manifest proof of the existence of the anointers. People sought through books for all the examples of poisonings which they could find; they cited Livy, Tacitus, Dionysius, nay, even Homer and Ovid, and many other authors beside, who have recounted or hinted at similar occurrences; among the moderns they were still richer in examples. A hundred authors were quoted who had either treated the subject scientifically, or spoken incidentally of poisonings, sorcery, ointments, powders: Cesalpino, Cardano, Grevino, Salio, Pareo, Schenchio, Zachia, and lastly, the fatal Delrio, who, if the renown of authors was in proportion to the good or evil occasioned by their works, would be a most renowned writer; this same Delrio, whose researches have cost more lives than the enterprise of many a conqueror, whose *Disquisitions on Magic* (the abstract of all that men had previously dreamed upon the subject) became the accepted text-book, and for more than a century remained the rule, and often the powerful impulse, to horrible and uninterrupted legal murders.

The better informed adopted as much of the belief of the vulgar as coincided with their already conceived ideas; the vulgar as much of the belief of the learned as they could comprehend; and thus what with the ideas of the learned and the vulgar, there was an immense amount of public folly.

But what excites the greatest astonishment is to

see the physicians, those very physicians who from the very commencement had believed in the plague, nay, even Tadino himself, who had prognosticated it, seen it enter the city, watched its progress, who had declared that this was the real plague, that it was contagious, and that, unless some remedy were discovered, the whole country would be desolated by it—to see him then, I say, draw from these very effects, arguments in favour of the poisonous and magical anointment, is the most astonishing thing of all. Curious is it indeed to find this man, who in the case of Carlo Colonna, the second individual who fell a victim to the plague, had remarked his delirium as an effect of the disease, adducing, in proof of the anointings and of the whole diabolical plot, the following fact: that two witnesses deposed that they had heard a sick friend of theirs relate how one night people had entered his room and offered him his recovery and money, if he would only anoint the houses in the neighbourhood; and how, upon his refusal, these persons had gone away, and there remained in their stead a wolf under the bed and three big cats upon it; ‘where they remained until the dawn of day,’ remarks our author.

Two illustrious and deserving writers* have affirmed that the Cardinal had his doubts regarding the existence of these anointers. We should very much like to represent the good prelate in this, as in so many other instances, superior to the greater number of his contemporaries, but we are, alas! obliged again to notice in him an example of the influence of general opinion even over the noblest minds of the age. We

* Muratori and P. Verri.

have seen, at least according to Ripamonti, how in the beginning he really had been in doubt; later, however, he maintained that, although credulity, ignorance, terror, and a desire to excuse this tardy recognition of the contagion had given rise to this opinion, still together with a deal that was exaggerated, there was at least a little that was true. There is preserved in the Ambrosian Library a little work written by him regarding this plague, in which this sentiment is often alluded to, once expressly declared. Here are his words:

“Unguenta vero hæc aiebant componi conficique multifariam, fraudisque vias fuisse complures: quarum sane fraudum et artium, aliis quidem assentimur, alias vero fictas fuisse commentitiasque arbitramur. De Pestilentia, quæ Mediolani, anno 1630, magnam stragem edidit.”

There were, however, certain individuals who thought even to the very end of all, that these were mere imaginations; and this we learn not from themselves, for no one was sufficiently bold openly to declare an opinion so opposed to that of the public, but from certain writers who deride, blame, or argue against this opinion, considering it a prejudice or an error which no one attempted publicly to dispute, but which nevertheless existed—tradition also speaks of it. “I have found well-informed people in Milan,” says the good Muratori, “who had received from their forefathers accurate information regarding these affairs, but who still were not fully persuaded of the existence of these poisonous ointments.” Thus one sees after all that there was, if one may so word it, a secret evaporation of the truth, a certain domestic

confidence; good sense did still exist, but it kept itself concealed through fear of common sense.

The magistrates, every day diminishing in numbers, and every day growing more dispirited and perplexed, employed the little resolution which remained to them in searching out these anointers. Among the papers relating to the plague, preserved among the archives to which we have already referred, is a letter in which the High-chancellor informs the Governor in the most serious and earnest manner, that he has received intelligence that, in a certain country-house belonging to the brothers Girolamo and Guilio Monti, two Milanese gentlemen, so much of this poison was made that forty men were occupied in the business, with the assistance of four Brescian cavaliers, who had the materials for the manufacture of this poison brought out of the Venetian States. He adds that he with the greatest secrecy had concerted measures for sending thither the Podestà of Milan and the Judge of the Tribunal of Health, accompanied by thirty horse-soldiers; that unfortunately one of the brothers had been informed of his intention time enough to carry off all traces of the crime, and that probably the informant was his friend, the Judge himself, who had found many excuses to delay his departure; but that notwithstanding this the Podestà and the soldiers had been despatched to reconnoitre the house, and see whether they could discover any vestiges of the manufacture, to gain information and to arrest all who were guilty.

The affair, however, was destined to end in nothing; since the contemporary writers who speak of the suspicions entertained against these gentlemen, do

not mention a single fact which proves their guilt. But it is only too clear upon another occasion that the magistrates imagined they had discovered the culprits.

The trials which occurred in consequence were certainly not the first of the kind: neither can they be considered as of rare occurrence in the history of jurisprudence. For, without speaking of antiquity, and merely referring to more modern times, in Palermo in 1526, in Geneva in 1530, 1545, and again in 1574, in Casal Monferrato in 1536, in Padua in 1555, in Turin in 1599, and again in the same year 1630, were many unfortunate wretches tried and condemned to torture (generally of the most fearful description) for having propagated the plague by means of powders, or ointments, or witchcraft, or even by all these means together. The affair of these anointers of Milan, as they were called, was the most celebrated, and is perhaps the one most worthy of observation; or, at least, offers the broadest field for observation, owing to the many authenticated documents which are still extant relative to it. But this is no subject to be treated of in a few words; and neither is this the place in which to treat it at the length it deserves. Besides, after pausing so long to hear the relation of these trials, the reader would certainly no longer trouble himself about the remainder of our history. Delaying this relation, therefore, until another time, we will at length return to our characters, intending no more to desert them until the very end of our history.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ONE night, towards the end of the month of August, during the very height of the plague, Don Rodrigo returned to his house in Milan, accompanied by the faithful Griso, one of the very few of his attendants who had remained alive. He had just left a company of friends who were accustomed to assemble together to banish by debauchery the melancholy of the times; each time they met were seen some fresh faces, whilst some old ones were missing. This day in particular Don Rodrigo had been one of the gayest; and among other things had caused the company to laugh very much over a species of funeral oration, spoken in honour of Count Attilio, who had been carried off by the plague two days previously.

During his journey, he experienced a feeling of uneasiness, a weakness, a failing of strength in his legs, a difficulty in breathing, an inward heat, which he would have chosen to attribute to the wine, to the late hours he had kept, to the influence of the season. He did not open his lips during the whole way; and his first words upon arriving at home were to order Griso to light him to his chamber. When they had arrived there, Griso remarking his master's distorted and inflamed countenance, and his bright eyes almost starting from their sockets, he kept himself at a certain

distance; for in those dangerous times, every one was obliged to acquire, as was said, a *medical eye*.

"I feel very well," said Don Rodrigo, who read in Griso's action the thoughts that were passing through his mind. "I feel very well indeed; but I have drunk, I have drunk, perhaps, a little too much. There was such excellent wine! But, with a good night's rest all will be well again. I am overpowered by sleep —— Remove that light a little, it blinds me—it annoys me——"

"The effects of the wine," said Griso, still keeping at a certain distance from his master. "But go to bed immediately, for a good sleep will do you good."

"Thou art right—if I can sleep —— Otherwise I am very well. Place that bell quite close to me, in case I should require anything in the night; and be careful to listen whether I ring. But I shall not require anything—— Carry away quickly that cursed light," he continued, whilst Griso executed his order, approaching as little as possible. "Diavolo! it troubles me more than I can say!"

Griso took the light; wished his master a good night, and went out in great haste, whilst his master drew himself under the coverlet.

The coverlet, however, appeared to him a very mountain. He threw it off him, and composed his limbs for sleep; for, in fact, he seemed perfectly overpowered by weariness. Scarcely, however, had he closed his eyes than he suddenly awoke with a start, as though some one had given him a push; and he felt this uneasiness and the burning heat ever increase. He recurred to thoughts of the season, of the wine, of the debauch which he had just committed; in these

he desired to find the cause of his illness. But there mingled itself with all his reflections one idea, which then occupied all minds, which had always formed part of the discourse held by this joyous company, for it was easier to turn it into ridicule, than to pass it over in silence —— the idea of the pest.

After having tossed about a long time, he at length fell asleep, and began dreaming the most horrible and tormenting dreams in the world. It appeared to him that he was in an immense church, in the midst of a vast crowd of people. He knew not how he came there, neither how this thought had entered his mind just upon such an occasion, and he grew enraged at the idea. He gazed upon those who surrounded him — nothing but pale, livid countenances, wild or dim eyes, hanging lips! The garments of these hideous beings scarcely concealed their forms, and through the rags were seen frightful blotches and plague spots. “Make way, you rascals!” he fancied he cried, gazing towards the door, which seemed far, far away from him; accompanying the cry with a menacing air, but without making the slightest movement, he only drew himself closer together, in order not to touch these loathsome creatures who were pressing upon him from every side. But none of these miserable beings gave the least sign, either of making way or even of having understood him; they pressed upon him still more; and worse than all, it seemed to him that some one among them struck him with his elbow on the left side, near his heart, where he immediately felt a sharp pang. He struggled to liberate himself, when suddenly he felt another pang shoot through the same place. Infuriated at this, he wished to draw

his sword, but, behold ! it appeared that the sword had glided along his side, and that the hilt was pressing in this very place. But placing his hand there, he did not find the sword ; but at his touch he felt a still keener agony. Agitated and out of breath he was about to cry still louder, when all these visages appeared to direct themselves towards one particular object. He also looked ; he perceived a pulpit, and in it some confused and ever-varying object ; he saw arise and become distinct, first, a shaven head, then two eyes, a whole countenance, a long white beard ; it was a friar standing upright in the pulpit—it was Fra Cristoforo !

It appeared to Don Rodrigo, that the friar having glanced over all the assembly, fixed his eyes upon him, at the same time raising his hand precisely in the same attitude which he had once assumed in an apartment in Don Rodrigo's palace. He raised his also, in rage, he made one great effort, as though to precipitate himself forward, and avert this arm suspended over his head ; a cry which had struggled in his throat escaped him, and he awoke. He let fall the arm which he had in reality raised ; he had great difficulty in collecting his ideas and in opening his eyes, for the bright light of the advanced morning did not cause him less annoyance than the candle of the evening before. At length, however, he recognised his bed, his chamber ; he comprehended that this was only a dream ; the church, the people, the friar, all had vanished, all, except this pain in his left side. He felt a violent and distressing palpitation of his heart ; there was a dull buzzing in his ears, an internal fire which consumed him, a greater heaviness in his

limbs than even the night before, when he had laid himself down upon his bed. He hesitated a moment before looking at the part where he felt the anguish; at length he uncovered it, cast one glance of terror at it, and saw a hideous tumour of a livid purple!

Don Rodrigo saw that he was lost; the terror of death took possession of him, and together with this, the still stronger terror of falling a prey to the monatti, and of being thrown into the lazaretto. And seeking the means of avoiding this terrible fate, he felt his thoughts become confused, he felt that the moment was approaching when he would only possess consciousness enough to suffer despair. He seized the bell, and rang it violently. Griso, who stood upon the alert, immediately appeared. He paused at a certain distance from the bed, gazed attentively upon his master, and assured himself of what the evening before he had already conjectured.

“Griso!” said Don Rodrigo, raising himself with difficulty in his bed, “thou hast always been my faithful attendant.”

“Yes, Signor.”

“I have always treated thee well.”

“Through your kindness.”

“I can confide in thee ——!”

“Diavolo!”

“I am ill, Griso.”

“I have perceived that you were.”

“If I get better, I will shew thee still more kindness than I have ever yet done.”

Griso returned no reply, but waited to see whither all this preamble should lead.

“I do not wish to make a confidant of any one but

thee," resumed Don Rodrigo; "do me a favour, Griso."

"Command me," said the bravo, replying in his usual manner to this unusual mode of address.

"Dost thou know where the house of the surgeon Chiodo is?"

"Very well."

"He is a worthy man, who, if one only pays him well, preserves the secrets of the sick. Go and seek him; tell him I will give four, six scudi, for each visit—more if he ask it. Tell him to come here immediately. Manage all things prudently, so that no one shall suspect anything."

"That is well thought of," remarked Griso; "I will go and return immediately."

"Listen, Griso! give me first of all a little water. I am consumed with a heat which I can endure no longer."

"No, Signor," replied Griso, "nothing without the advice of the physician. These are rapid diseases, there is no time to lose. Be quiet; in the twinkling of an eye I shall be here again with Chiodo."

Having said this, he went out, closing the door after him.

Don Rodrigo followed him in imagination to the house of Chiodo; he counted his steps, he calculated the time. Every now and then he looked at this spot, but always turned aside his head with horror. After some time he began to listen for the arrival of the surgeon; this force of attention suspended for awhile the sentiment of pain, and kept his thoughts from wandering. Suddenly he hears a distant sound of bells, which seems to approach from his rooms and

not from the street. He listens again; he hears the sound grow stronger, and at the same time the tread of footsteps, and at once a horrible suspicion passes through his mind. He sits up in bed and listens still more attentively; he hears a dull sound in the neighbouring chambers, as of some burden which has been set down with precaution; he puts his legs out of bed as though about to rise; he does not move his gaze from the door; it opens, and he sees appear and advance towards him two old and dirty red garments, two cursed faces—in a word, two monatti! He partly sees also through the half-open door the countenance of Griso.

‘ Ah, infamous traitor! —— Away canaille! Biondino! Carlotto! help! I am murdered!’ shouted Don Rodrigo, extending his hand under the pillow to seek a pistol; he seized one; but at his first cry the monatti had rushed towards him; the most agile is already upon him before he can make another movement; he snatches the pistol out of his hands, he flings it away, forces Don Rodrigo to lie down again, and holds him down, crying in a tone between rage and mockery, “ Ah, villain! this against the monatti? against the ministers of the tribunal? against those who perform the work of mercy?”

“ Hold him fast until we can carry him away,” said the companion, going towards a strong chest. Upon this Griso entered, and began to assist him in breaking open the lock.

“ Scoundrel!” shouted Don Rodrigo, looking at him from underneath the one who was holding him down, and struggling violently in his nervous arms, “ Only let me kill that infamous wretch,” he at length

said to the monatti, "and then you may do with me what you like."

He then commenced calling with all the strength which yet remained to him upon his other attendants; but this was in vain, for the abominable Griso had sent them all far away, as though at the command of his master, before having proposed to the monatti that they should come with him and partake in the spoil.

"Be quiet, be quiet," said the man who was then holding the unfortunate Rodrigo down upon his bed. Then turning to those who were loading themselves with the booty, he cried, "Behave like honest people!"

"And thou—thou!" bellowed forth Don Rodrigo, when he saw Griso occupied in breaking open the chest, and bringing forth money and valuables to divide with his friends. "Thou after — Ah, devil of hell! I may still recover! I may still recover!" Griso spoke not a word, and he even avoided as much as possible turning towards his poor master.

"Hold him fast," said the other monatto; "he is out of his senses."

And this was indeed true. After a last and still more violent effort to liberate himself, he fell back suddenly, exhausted and insensible; he still gazed around him like one under a spell, and every now and then either struggled feebly or moaned.

The monatti took him, one by the feet, the other by the shoulders, and placed him on a handbarrow, which they had left in the neighbouring chamber. One of them returned immediately to fetch the booty; then raising their miserable burden, they bore it away.

Griso remained behind to select in haste such articles as would be most to his taste ; made all his spoil up into a bundle, and then departed. He had been very careful neither to touch the monatti, nor to allow them to touch him ; but in his thirst after gain he had removed from near the bed his master's clothes, and had, without reflecting upon the danger which he ran, shaken them to see whether they contained any money. He, however, reflected upon it the next day ; for whilst carousing in a tavern, he was seized with a cold shiver, his eyes grew dim, he lost all power, and sank down. Abandoned by his companions, he himself fell into the hands of the monatti, who having robbed him of all he had about him, threw him into a cart, where he expired before reaching the lazaretto, whither his master had been carried.

Leaving Don Rodrigo in this abode of woe, we must now go in search of another personage, whose history would never have been involved with that of Don Rodrigo, had not Don Rodrigo resolutely insisted upon it ; nay, one might also pretty certainly affirm, that without this will of poor Don Rodrigo's there would have been no history whatsoever to relate—we mean Renzo, whom we left at his new manufactory, under the name of Antonio Rivolta.

He had remained there about five or six months, when war being declared between the Republic and the King of Spain, and all fear on his account having ceased, Bartolo went in all haste to seek him, both because he was really attached to him, and because Renzo, who was a youth of talent and clever in his business, was of great use to a *factotum*, without his ever being able to aspire to such an honour himself,

and all through this blessed misfortune of not knowing how to conduct a pen. As this little circumstance was among the motives which influenced Bartolo, we have felt obliged to state it. Perhaps you would have liked a more ideal Bartolo. I can only say, fabricate one for yourself then. This Bartolo was such as we describe him.

Renzo had then returned with his cousin, and worked with him. More than once, and especially upon the receipt of Agnese's letters, he had been seized with the desire of turning soldier. And occasions for this were not wanting, for precisely at this epoch the republic stood in great need of recruits. The temptation had been all the stronger for Renzo, as just then the invasion of the Milanese States was spoken of, and naturally it appeared to him that it would be very fine indeed to return to his home as a conqueror, see Lucia, and come to an explanation with her. But Bartolo, with his many good arguments, had always known how to divert him from this resolution.

"If they have to go there," he would say, "they can get there very well without thee, and thou canst follow after at thy ease; and if they return back with broken heads, will it not have been the best to remain away? People will not be found wanting. And—before they can set foot—— For myself I am very incredulous: they may boast—yes, certainly—but the Milanese is no mouthful to be so easily swallowed. Spain is in the game, my good fellow; and dost thou know what manner of thing Spain is? San Marco is strong at home, but he is not strong enough. Have patience: art not thou comfortable here? I know what thou wouldst say; but if it is destined that the

thing should succeed, be sure that by committing no follies it will succeed all the sooner. Some saint will aid thee. Only believe that this is no business for thee. Does it appear to thee proper to leave winding silk to go and kill people? What wilt thou do with this race of men? War requires men trained expressly to the business."

At other times Renzo wished to travel there secretly, in disguise and under a false name; but Bartolo always managed to dissuade him from any such enterprise.

The plague having at length spread itself through all the Milanese, and having reached the Bergamascan territory, did not delay—do not alarm yourself, good reader, lest I should relate to you the history of this plague also. All that I now say is, that Renzo caught the plague and cured himself, that is to say, he did nothing, but left all to nature. He was brought to the brink of the grave, but his good constitution conquered the strength of the disease, and in a few days he was out of danger. With his life, his anxieties, his desires, his hopes, his remembrances, and the projects of his life, returned with double force; and that is saying that his thoughts were more than ever fixed upon Lucia. What had become of her, in these miserable times when it was quite an exception to find a friend alive? And then to be within so short a distance of her, and yet know nothing of her. And to remain, God knows how long, in this uncertainty. And then even should this fear be calmed, should every danger have ceased, should he gain intelligence that Lucia yet lived, there was still this great mystery, this embarrassment of the vow! "I will go, I will

go myself, and gain intelligence regarding all these points," said he to himself, long before he was in any condition to support himself. "Provided she only still lives! I will know how to find her out! I will hear from her own lips what sort of thing this promise is; I will make her comprehend that it is not binding. I will conduct her back with me here; and this poor Agnese, if she still lives! this poor Agnese, who has always wished so well by me, and who I am sure still wishes me well—but then the arrest?—those who remain alive have now other things to think about. Here even one sees certain people go about in safety, who —— Is there only security then for rogues? And at Milan, people say there is worse confusion. If I let such a fine opportunity slip, the pest! I shall never have such a good one again."

"One must always hope, my dear Renzo."

Scarcely could he drag himself along, when he went in search of Bartolo, who until the present time had succeeded in avoiding the plague, and had shut himself up in his house. He did not enter his dwelling, but, calling to him from the street, he made him approach the window.

"Ah, ah!" said Bartolo, "thou hast then escaped. Thou art a fortunate fellow!"

"I am still rather weak in the legs, as thou mayst see; but I am quite out of all danger."

"Ah! I should like to stand upon thy feet. Formerly to say, *I am well*, seemed to express every thing, now that counts but little. But when one can say, *I am better*, that is a fine thing!"

Renzo having prophesied a deal of good-luck for his cousin, imparted to him his design.

“Go this time! and may heaven bless thee!” replied the cousin: “endeavour to avoid the officers of justice, as I seek to avoid the contagion; and if God wills that it should go well with both of us, we shall see each other again.”

“Oh! I shall certainly return; and O, if I should only not return alone! However, I will hope.”

“Return in company; for, God willing, there will be work enough for all, and we will form a pleasant little society. Heaven only grant that thou mayst find me here, and that this infernal influence may have ceased!”

“We shall meet again, we shall meet again; we must see each other once more.”

“Again I say, God grant that we may!”

For several days, Renzo took a deal of exercise, both to try and to increase his strength; and scarcely did he seem able to perform the journey before he set off. He placed underneath his clothes a belt containing the fifty scudi which had remained untouched, and which he had mentioned to no one, not even to Bartolo. He then took a few *quattrini*, which he had saved by exercising the most rigid economy; took under his arm a small bundle of clothes; put into his pocket a certificate, made out in the name of Antonio Rivolta, and given him by his second master; placed in a pocket of his breeches a large knife, the most harmless weapon an honest man might carry about with him in those unsettled times; and departed about the end of August, three days after Don Rodrigo had been carried to the lazaretto. He directed his steps towards Lecco, desiring before he went to Milan to call at his native village, where he hoped

to find Agnese still alive, and could learn from her lips some of those things which he was dying to know.

Those few who had recovered from the plague were looked upon by the rest of the population as a privileged class. A great portion of the survivors were either languishing or almost near death themselves; and those who until then had been respected by the disease, lived in a perpetual fear. They walked with precaution, they had an uneasy air, they hastened on with speed, yet hesitation, for every thing might turn into some deadly weapon of destruction for them. Whilst those who had recovered, full of confidence, for it might sooner be said to be a miracle than a rarity to have the plague twice, advanced into the midst of the contagion with boldness and resolution; like the knights of the Middle Ages, who, clothed in steel, and mounted upon palfreys almost as strongly clothed in armour as their masters, wandered in search of adventure (from whence is derived their glorious denomination of knights errant), amidst a poor pedestrian crowd of peasants and serfs, who had only their garments to preserve them from the blows of their enemies.

With such security, tempered somewhat by the solicitude which the reader already knows, and saddened by thoughts of the general calamity, Renzo approached his house, under a beautiful heaven and through a beautiful country; but he only rarely met with what might be sooner called wandering shades than living beings, or now and then perhaps a corpse carried to the grave without funeral honours, without a hymn, without attendants. Towards noon-day he

rested in a little wood, to eat some bread which he had brought with him. As for fruit, he had all along the road found far more than he required: figs, peaches, plums, apples, as many as he could desire; he had only to enter the fields and stretch out his hand to gather them from the trees, or pick them up from the ground, which seemed literally strewn with them, for this year was singularly abundant, especially in fruit, and there was scarcely any one left to think about caring for the crops. The grapes, one could almost say, concealed the vines, and were left to the discretion of the passer-by.

Towards evening, Renzo discovered his native village. At this sight, already prepared for it as he was, his heart beat more rapidly. He was assailed suddenly by a crowd of sorrowful remembrances and sorrowful presentiments; he seemed still to hear the melancholy tolling of that bell which had accompanied, followed him when flying from his home, and yet at the same time he felt the death-like silence which reigned there. He was seized with still stronger emotion when he arrived upon the open space before the church; and he expected to be even more affected when he reached the end of his journey, for he intended to stop at the cottage which he had formerly been accustomed to call Lucia's cottage. Now it could, even under the most favourable circumstances, be no more than the cottage of Agnese; and the only boon he besought of heaven was to find this good woman there in health and in safety. He proposed to ask for lodging in this cottage, conjecturing truly that his own would now be only a fit habitation for rats and polecats.

Not wishing to be seen, he struck into a by-path, the same along which he had gone in such good company the fatal night when they had surprised the Curate. About the middle of this road was situated on one hand Renzo's vineyard, on the other his little house. He was able thus as he passed by to enter for a moment and see how his affairs stood.

As he walked along, he kept looking about him, anxious and yet fearful to meet with some one; after a few steps he saw a man in his shirt, seated upon the ground, his back supported against a jessamine hedge, his whole attitude was that of an idiot. By his air and then by his countenance he thought he recognised in him the poor silly Gervaso, who had gone as second witness in the unlucky expedition. But upon approaching nearer he perceived that it was the very bright Tonio who had conducted him. The plague having deprived him both of his bodily and mental vigour, had developed both in his countenance and manner the faint resemblance which he had borne to his idiotic brother.

"O Tonio!" cried Renzo, pausing before him; "is it thou?"

Tonio raised his eyes, without moving his head.

"Tonio! dost thou not recognise me?"

"Is it my turn?" asked Tonio, remaining with his mouth open.

"Poor Tonio! But dost thou not recognise me?"

"Is it my turn?" he again asked, with a silly smile.

Renzo, seeing that he could get no other reply from poor Tonio, pursued his way still more oppressed with melancholy. All at once, at a turn of the road, he saw something black approaching, and immediately

recognised this to be Don Abbondio. He was moving forward with slow steps, supporting himself upon his staff with the air of one who has great difficulty in dragging himself along. As he approached, it became evident from his pale and meagre visage, and from his every action, that he also had suffered from the tempest. Don Abbondio gazed at Renzo; he seemed to be the same, and yet not the same; there appeared to be something foreign in his apparel,—and this was precisely the foreign air which Renzo had brought with him from Bergamo.

“It is certainly he!” said Don Abbondio to himself; and as he raised his hands towards heaven, with a movement of vexation and astonishment, the staff which he held in the right hand quivered in the air, and you saw his poor arms dance in the sleeves which formerly had been almost too tight for them. Renzo quickened his step and hastened towards him, making him a low bow; for, spite of the manner in which they had parted, he was still the pastor.

“Are you here?” exclaimed Don Abbondio.

“I am here as you perceive. Is nothing known about Lucia?”

“What would you have one know about her? Absolutely nothing is known about her, only she is at Milan, if she is still in this world. But you—?”

“And is Agnese still alive?”

“She may be. But what would you have me know? She is not here. But——”

“Where is she?”

“She is gone to stay in the Valsassina, with her relations at Pasturo, you know; for people say that there the plague does not make such fearful ravages as here. But you, I say——”

“ I am sorry for this. And then, Father Cristoforo— ”

“ Has been gone away some time. But—— ”

“ I know that ; they wrote me word all about it ; I only asked if in case he were returned.”

“ Oh, certainly ! Nothing more has ever been heard of him. But you—— ”

“ I am very sorry for that.”

“ But for the love of heaven, tell me what you are come to do here. Do you not know all about that little affair of the arrest —— ? ”

“ What does that matter ! People have other things to think about now. I wanted to come and look after my affairs. And it is not precisely known —— ”

“ What then do you want to see ? Now-a-days, there is no longer any one, there is no longer any thing ; and then, as I said before, is it wise, with this little affair of the arrest hanging over you, to come here, precisely into this place, into the very den of the wolf ? Listen to the advice of an old man who has more wisdom than yourself, and who speaks from the love he bears you. Escape quickly, before any one sees you ; return from whence you came. If any one happens to have seen you already, return even still more quickly. Do you imagine that this air will be good for you ? Are you not aware that they came to seek you here ; that they have sought and sought ; that they have turned every thing topsy-turvy —— ”

“ I know this all only too well, the rascals ! ”

“ Then wherefore —— ”

“ But if I tell you that I don't think about it. And that man, is he still alive ? is he here ? ”

“ I tell you that no one is here ; I tell you no

longer to think about affairs of this place ; I tell you that ——”

“ I demand whether he is here.”

“ Oh, holy heaven ! speak in a different manner. Is it then possible that after all these misfortunes you can be so fiery ?”

“ Is he here, or is he not here ?”

“ He is not here, then. But the plague, my son, the plague ! Who is he who dares to wander about in these times ?”

“ If there were nothing but the plague in the world —— I speak for myself: I have had it, and am safe.”

“ And are not such dangers warnings to you ? When one has escaped a danger of this kind, it appears to me one ought to thank heaven, and ——”

“ I sincerely thank heaven.”

“ And not go in search of others, I say. Follow my advice ——”

“ You have also had the plague, Signor Curato, if I do not mistake.”

“ Whether I have had it ? Yes, that I have, the most terrible, the most infamous plague ; it is indeed a miracle that I am still here. I have just now great need of a little quiet to recover myself: however, I am beginning to get a little better —— In the name of heaven what are you come to do here ? Return ——”

“ You always have recourse to your *returns*. I should have had no need to stir myself, if I must return immediately. You keep asking why are you come ? why are you come ? Oh, excellent ! I am come home.”

“ Come home ——”

“ Tell me, are many people dead here ?”

“Ah, ah!” exclaimed Don Abbondio; and commencing with poor Perpetua, he enumerated a long list of individuals, and even entire families, who had been swept away. Renzo certainly had expected something similar; but hearing all these names of acquaintance, friends, relations, he was seized with deep grief, and with a bowed head, continued to exclaim every moment: “poor fellow! poor girl! poor things!”

“Ah, you see!” cried Don Abbondio, “and it is not yet come to an end. If those who remain don’t adopt a little wisdom, and chase all silly whims out of their heads, this will be nothing less than the end of the world.”

“Don’t trouble yourself; I am not intending to remain here.”

“Ah! heaven be praised that you have still a little sense left. And now return immediately to the Bergamascan ——”

“I am not thinking of that.”

“How! you are not going to commit a still greater piece of folly?”

“Don’t you trouble yourself about it, I tell you. It concerns me; I am no longer a child; I have the use of my reason. I trust, however, that you will not mention to any one that you have seen me. You are a pastor, I am one of your flock; you will not betray me.”

“I understand,” said Don Abbondio, sighing in an angry manner, “I understand. You wish to ruin yourself and me into the bargain. Neither all that you nor myself have suffered is then sufficient for you. I understand, I understand.” And continuing to mutter these last words between his teeth, he pursued his road.

Renzo remained sad and discontented, reflecting where he should find a place of repose. Among the families enumerated by Don Abbondio, there was one which had entirely perished, with the exception of one member, a youth about the age of Renzo, and his companion in childhood. The cottage stood removed a few paces out of the village. Renzo thought that he would try his fortune there.

Going along, he passed by his vineyard; and from its exterior he could easily infer in what state it was. The trees which he had left no longer looked over the wall; all that was to be seen were weeds, which had sprung up in his absence. He approached a gap (there was no longer any trace of a gate), he cast a glance around,—alas, poor vineyard! During two winters in succession, the peasants had come to fetch firewood out of *that poor lad's vineyard*, as they expressed it. Vines, mulberry trees, fruit trees of every kind, all had been lopped in the most dreadful manner, or cut up at the roots. There, however, remained the traces of former cultivation; young layers or suckers from the mulberry, fig, peach, and plum trees, scattered sparingly among, and almost suffocated by, a new variegated and prolific generation of plants, which had sprung up without the aid of man—nettles, ferns, darnels, dog-grass, wild oats, the amaranthus, the succory, wild sorrel, and many other similar plants, which the peasants of all countries have, according to their manner, formed into one large class, calling them weeds, or something of that kind. There was indeed a medley of stems, some trying to shoot one above the other high into the air—others creeping along the ground, and stealing for

themselves a place by any means; a strange confusion of leaves, flowers, and fruits, of a hundred colours, of a hundred forms, of a hundred sizes; in ears, in bunches, clusters, round, oval, white, red, yellow, blue. Some plants higher and more conspicuous, but which were not of much greater value, detached themselves from the vulgar crowd: there was the Turkish vine, higher than all the rest, with its long reddish branches, with its luxuriant dark green leaves, some already edged with purple, with its pendant bunches of fruit, the lower berries a deep violet colour, higher up lilac, then green, and the topmost sprays crowded with white blossoms: the mullein with its woolly lower leaves, with its stem directed towards heaven, and its long cone scattered, or rather starred over with bright yellow flowers; thistles with their leaves and branches full of thorns, with their prickly calixes from whence issued tufts of white or purple flowers, or whence were borne away by the winds the light and feathery seeds. Here a quantity of bindweed had attached itself to the young shoots of a mulberry, and had entirely covered them with its pendant leaves and elegant white bells; there a wild gourd, with its scarlet fruit, had twisted itself round the young shoots of a vine, which, having in vain sought a more solid support, now in its turn twisted its tendrils round the gourd, and mingling their weak stems and similar leaves, they both alternately dragged each other down, as often happens with the weak who lean for support upon each other. Ivy was everywhere — it stretched from one plant to another, climbing, descending, entangling or extending its branches, according to the opposition it encountered;

and having arrived at the very limits of the vineyard, seemed as though it would dispute the entrance even with the master himself.

He, however, did not care about entering such a vineyard; and very likely he did not pause to look at it as long as we have taken to describe it. He hastened from this melancholy spectacle; at a short distance was his cottage; he traversed the little garden, walking up to his knees in weeds, with which it was as completely covered as the vineyard. He set foot on the threshold of one of the two rooms which were situated on the ground-floor. At the sound of his footsteps a number of enormous rats fled in affright and concealed themselves in the filth which covered the floor. The room was still as it had been left by the soldiers. Renzo glanced towards the walls, they were incrustated with the vilest filth, and blackened with smoke. He raised his eyes towards the ceiling, it was a perfect tapestry of cobwebs! There was nothing else left for him. From this scene he also hastened; he turned back through the garden, treading in the same track which he had made for himself a few moments before; he pursued another small path to the left which led to the fields, and without encountering a living soul, he arrived near the house where he had thought of stopping to rest himself. Night was already coming on. His friend was at the door seated upon a small wooden bench, his arms folded, his eyes directed towards the heavens, he appeared a man confounded by misfortune, grown wild through solitude. Hearing a footstep, he turned to see who there might be, and as the twilight and foliage prevented his distinguishing who was the

new comer, he cried in a loud voice, "Are there no other people than I? Have I not done enough yesterday? Leave me quiet for a little while, that will also be a work of mercy."

Renzo, not comprehending what this meant, replied by calling him by name.

"Renzo!——" cried the friend, at once exclaiming and interrogating.

"Yes, it is he," said Renzo, and they flew towards each other.

"Is it really thou!" cried the friend when they had approached each other." O how happy I am to see thee! Who would have thought it? I took thee for Paolin of the dead, who is always coming to torment me about burying people. Dost thou know that I am left alone? alone! alone! alone, like a hermit!"

"I know it only too well," replied Renzo. And embracing and exchanging questions and replies they had entered the poor cottage together. As soon as they were there, without suspending the discourse, the friend commenced making in honour of Renzo such preparations as the time and season permitted. He placed water upon the fire, and began to make the *polenta*; then gave Renzo the roller to stir it with, and disappeared saying, "I am left alone,—ah, I am left alone!"

He soon returned, bringing with him a small pail of milk, a little salted meat, a little cream cheese, and a few figs and peaches. They placed all these good things and the *polenta* upon the table, returning mutual thanks, one for the visit, the other for the reception. And thus, after an absence of two years,

they found that they were dearer friends than ever they had imagined themselves to be, even when they used to meet every day; for, observes the manuscript, they had both since that time experienced suffering, which teaches what balm benevolence is to the human soul.

Certainly, however, no one could supply to Renzo the place of Agnese, or console him for her absence, not alone on account of his old and peculiar affection for her, but also because she alone could explain one among the many things which he so anxiously desired to know. He hesitated a moment whether he should continue his journey, or whether he should go in search of Agnese, since she was at so short a distance; but, considering that Agnese would be unable to give him any information regarding Lucia's health, he determined to act according to his first resolution, proceed direct to Milan, remove all doubt from his mind, hear Lucia pronounce his sentence, and then bear intelligence of her to her mother. However, he learned from his friend many things regarding which he was yet in ignorance, and many things concerning Lucia's adventures and the persecutions which she had experienced were explained to him; he also heard how Don Rodrigo had disappeared, and not again shewn his face in that part of the world. He learned also (and this was for Renzo information of no small importance) how properly to pronounce the name of Don Ferrante. Agnese, it is true, had caused her secretary to write the name, but heaven only knows how it had been written; and the Bergamascan interpreter, in reading the letter, had pronounced it so strangely that, had Renzo gone with this

word in his mouth, when seeking the family in Milan, he would most probably have found no one who could have divined the object of his search. Nevertheless, this was the only clue he possessed whereby he could discover Lucia's abode. As far as the law was concerned, he was enabled to assure himself that all danger was far distant: the Signor Podestà had died of the plague—who knew when another would be nominated? Most of the constables and officers of justice had also perished, and the few who yet remained had other things to think about than such old affairs.

He in his turn related his adventures to his friend, and received in exchange a hundred anecdotes, about the march of the army—the plague—the anointers—and the wonders. “These are horrible things,” remarked the friend, accompanying Renzo into a chamber which the contagion had depopulated; “things which one should never have expected to see; things to destroy the happiness of one's whole life; still, however, it is a great consolation to talk about them with a friend.”

At the break of day the two friends were all ready in the kitchen: Renzo equipped for his journey, with his girdle concealed under his doublet, and his knife in the pocket of his breeches; he left his bundle in deposit with his host. “If all goes well,” said he, “if I find her alive, if —— I return this way, I will hasten to Pasturo, and tell the good news to Agnese, and then—and then—— But if, by mischance—which God forbid!—then I shall not know what to do; I shall not know where to go; however, you will certainly not see me again in these parts.” And

saying this, standing upon the threshold, he raised his eyes, and gazed with mingled tenderness and anguish upon the sunrise, which gilded his native mountains—a glorious vision, to which he had for so long a time been a stranger. The friend counselled him, as is customary, to hope for the best, wished him to take something to eat, then accompanied him a short way on his journey, and took leave of him with many good wishes.

Renzo pursued his road at a gentle pace, for he could easily reach this day the immediate neighbourhood of Milan, and early the next morning enter the city, and directly commence his search. His journey was made without any accident or any occurrence which could distract his thoughts beyond the usual misery and suffering. He paused at noontide in a little wood, as he had done the day before, to eat a mouthful and repose himself. Passing through Monza, he purchased two loaves at a small shop, where he saw bread exhibited for sale. The baker signed to him not to enter, extended a small shovel towards him, upon which stood a little porringer, which contained vinegar and water, telling Renzo to place the money in it, and this being done he with a pair of tongs presented the two little loaves, one after another, which Renzo consigned to his pockets.

Towards evening he arrived at Greco, without knowing its name however; but, with the little he remembered of his former journey, and by calculating the distance he had come from Monza, he conjectured that he could not be far distant from the city. He quitted the high-road for the fields, and went in search of some hut where he might pass the night, for he

would not again embarrass himself with inns. He found a better accommodation than he had gone in search of; he perceived an opening in the hedge which surrounded the yard of a dairy, he entered it boldly. There was no one about, he saw in one corner a large shed, with a deal of hay piled up under it, against which leaned a ladder; he cast a glance around, then mounted; arranged himself for the night, and, in fact, immediately fell asleep, only to wake at daybreak. Then approaching the edge of this immense bed, he thrust out his head, and perceiving no one, he descended the ladder by which he had mounted, and passed out through the opening by which he had entered, and commenced his journey, taking the Cathedral for his polar-star. After a short walk, he reached the walls of Milan, between the Eastern and the New Gate.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

RENZO had heard something vague regarding the existence of certain severe orders intended to prevent the entrance of all strangers who were unprovided with certificates of health; nevertheless he believed that with a little address it would be very easy to evade these prohibitions. And certainly nothing could be more true. Without speaking of the causes which at that time prevented any public order being rigorously executed, and without even mentioning the especial reasons which rendered the execution of this particular order peculiarly difficult, Milan was at this moment so circumstanced that there no longer seemed any utility in preserving this strict watch. Whoever now entered the city appeared a man rather reckless of his own safety, than an object to be feared by the citizens.

Acting upon this knowledge, Renzo's design was to attempt an entrance through the first gate he approached, and if he met with any opposition to wander about until he found one where access was less difficult. Heaven only knows how many gates Renzo imagined there were at Milan! Having arrived under the walls, he paused to look around him, with the air of one who, not knowing which direction to choose, seems to seek advice from the surrounding objects. But to the right and to the left

he only saw a winding path; in front of him only the city walls; nowhere did he perceive the slightest trace of living beings, except that from a certain part of the ramparts there arose a column of dense black smoke, which ascending spread itself into vast masses, and hung suspended, motionless and dark, in the air. These were the garments, beds, and other infected articles, which were being delivered to the flames; and in many parts of the ramparts appeared traces of these melancholy bonfires.

The day was gloomy, the air heavy, the whole heavens were veiled by one vast immoveable cloud, which appeared to deny the presence of the sun without prophesying rain; the whole surrounding country lay most part uncultivated and utterly barren, every blade of grass was burnt up, not a single drop of dew was to be seen upon the withered and fainting leaves. This solitude, this silence, thus near a mighty city, increased Renzo's uneasiness, and rendered his thoughts still more gloomy.

He paused a few moments, and directed his steps towards the right, unconsciously approaching the New Gate, which he could not see, although he was quite close upon it, on account of a bulwark behind which it was concealed. He hastened on, and having turned the angle of the bulwark, the first thing that met his view was a wooden hut, at the entrance of which stood a sentinel, leaning upon his musket, with a certain air of negligence or weariness. Behind this hut was a palisade, and behind the palisade stood the gate, that is to say, two walls surmounted by a small roof, intended to preserve the folding doors which now stood open, as did also the grating in the palisade.

Precisely before this opening placed upon the ground was a melancholy impediment—a handbarrow, upon which two *monatti* were placing a poor wretch whom they were about to carry away. This was the chief of the custom-house officers, who had a short time before been seized with the plague. Renzo paused where he was, waiting until this sad spectacle should be at an end. The convoy having departed, and no one appearing to close the wicket, it struck Renzo that now was the proper moment to enter, and he hastened on with quick steps, but the sentinel shouted roughly after him “Holla!” Renzo again stopped, and giving him a sign of intelligence, drew forth a half ducat, and shewed it him. The sentinel, either having already had the plague, or fearing it less than he loved half ducats, signed to Renzo to throw him the money, and seeing it immediately fly to his feet, murmured, “enter quickly.” Renzo did not wait to hear this twice, but passed quickly on through the palisade, through the gateway, and pursued his road without any one paying attention to him, except that after he had walked about forty paces, he heard another “Holla!” which another sentinel shouted after him. This time he feigned not to hear the cry, and without even turning round quickened his step. “Holla!” cried the sentinel again, in a voice which announced rather impatience than any resolution of forcing Renzo to obey his order; and seeing his order was not attended to, he shrugged his shoulders, and returned into his sentry-box, with the air of one who considered it more important to avoid approaching the passers-by, than to inquire into their affairs.

The road which Renzo had taken led straight to

the canal called the Naviglio: on either hand, were hedges or garden walls, churches or convents, but few houses. At the upper end of this street, and about the middle of the one which runs along the canal, stood a column, with a cross placed upon it, called the cross of Saint Eusebio. Intently as Renzo gazed before him, he could distinguish nothing but the said cross. At length, however, he perceived a citizen approaching him. "Here, at least, comes a Christian!" exclaimed our hero to himself, and immediately turned towards this man, thinking that he would gain from him information regarding his way. The citizen had perceived the stranger as he advanced, and regarded him with suspicion, which was much increased when he observed that this stranger, instead of going about his own business, approached him. Renzo, when he had arrived within a few paces of the citizen, raised his hat like a polite mountaineer as he was, and holding it in his left hand, placed the right hand in the crown, and thus drew near the gentleman, who, his eyes almost starting out of his head, hastily stepped back, and raising a knotty stick, directed its end, which was of iron, at Renzo's face, crying out at the same time, with all his might—"away! away! away!"

"Oh, oh!" exclaimed in his turn our poor Renzo. He placed his hat again upon his head, and not desiring a greeting after this manner, turned his back upon this extravagant man, and pursued his way—or more correctly that way in which he happened to find himself.

The citizen also pursued his, trembling violently, and turning to look back every moment. Having

reached home, he related how he had been met by an anointer, who had an humble and gentle manner, but whose countenance was that of an infamous impostor, and who had either his box of ointment or his phial of powder, he was not certain which it was, concealed in the crown of his hat, with which he would have certainly touched him, had he not managed to keep the wretch at a certain distance. "If he had only approached a single step nearer," added the citizen, "I would have run him straight through, the villain! The misfortune was, that we happened to be in such a solitary place; if it had been in the heart of Milan I would have called for help, and people would have fallen upon him. They would most assuredly have found this infernal mixture in his hat. But alone as we were, I must consider myself fortunate in having succeeded in frightening him, without drawing upon myself a misfortune, for a little powder is easily thrown; and these people have a wonderful dexterity in such matters; besides they have the devil on their sides. He must now be wandering about Milan; who knows what mischief he may be about?" And to the end of his life, which was a very long one, whenever the citizen spoke of the anointers, he repeated this history, and always added: "Don't let those who maintain that there is no truth in these things talk to me; before speaking, one ought to have seen the thing with one's own eyes."

Renzo, far from suspecting the danger which he had just escaped, and moved by anger rather than fear, meditated, whilst he pursued his way, upon this singular reception, and pretty nearly divined the thoughts of the stranger; but the whole affair appeared

to him so irrational, that he concluded this man must be a little out of his right mind. "The commencement is bad," he, however, thought to himself; "it seems as though I had an unlucky star to guide me in this Milan. Every thing seconds my entrance; but then, as soon as I am once within the walls, I meet with nothing but misfortunes. Enough—with the aid of God—if I find —— if I succeed in discovering —— ah! then all this will appear as nothing!"

Having arrived at the bridge, he turned round without any hesitation towards the left, and entered the street of San Marco, imagining that this street ought to conduct him to the heart of the city. As he proceeded, he looked here and there to see whether he could discover any human being; but he only saw a miserable, hideous corpse, which lay in a small ditch. Having passed this dreadful object, he heard a cry of "There goes a man!" and looking round he saw at a short distance, in the balcony of a miserable isolated house, a poor woman standing, with a group of children around her; she continued to call, and signed to him with her hand to approach. He ran towards her; and as soon as he arrived, "O kind youth!" exclaimed the woman, "for the love of your poor lost ones, have the goodness to go and inform the commissary that we are left here entirely forgotten. They have nailed up the door, as you may see; and since yesterday morning, no one has come to bring us food. All the hours that I have stood here I have not found a single christian who would do me this charity; and these poor little innocents are dying of hunger."

"Of hunger?" cried Renzo, thrusting his hands into his pockets; "here, here," said he, drawing

forth the two loaves, "let down something in which I can place them."

"God will reward you; only wait a moment," said the woman; and she went in search of a basket, and a cord also, by which to let it down from the window. Meanwhile, Renzo recollected the two little loaves he had found near the cross, upon his first entrance into Milan, and he thought to himself—"Only see: here is, perhaps, even a more perfect restitution than if I had returned the loaves to their proper possessor; for truly this is a deed of mercy."

"As to the commissary of whom you spoke, my good lady," he said, placing the bread in the basket, "I am afraid I shall be unable to serve you; for to speak the truth, I am a stranger, and know nothing about this place. However, if I meet with any man who is at all civil or humane, I will tell him."

The woman besought him to do so, and mentioned to him the name of the street in which she lived.

"You also," resumed Renzo, "can do me a favour, I fancy, a real charity, without in the least incommoding yourself. Do you know how to direct me to the mansion of a great family who live here in Milan, the mansion of?"

"I know very well that there is such a mansion, but unfortunately I do not know where it is situated. Going straightforward you will meet with some one who will direct you. And remember to mention us to him."

"Do not fear," said Renzo, and pursued his way.

At every step he heard a noise, which he had first perceived whilst conversing with the poor woman, increase and approach; it was a sound of wheels and

horses' hoofs, accompanied by the ringing of little bells, and every now and then it was embellished by the cracking of whips, and by shouts. He looked about him, but could perceive nothing. Having reached the end of the winding street along which he was walking, and having arrived at the square of San Marco, the first objects which met his view were two upright posts, with a rope and pulleys; he was not long in recognising (for it was a very familiar object in those times) the abominable machine of torture. These machines had been raised in all open squares, and in all spacious streets, in order that the deputies belonging to each quarter of the city, who were empowered with the most arbitrary authority, might immediately exercise it upon any one who should chance to merit punishment, either upon people who escaped out of a condemned house, upon underlings who refused to obey, or in short, upon any one whom they chose to torture. It was one of those extreme and inefficacious measures of which in those times, and especially in such moments, the public authorities were so profuse.

Whilst Renzo stood gazing at the machine, and wondering wherefore it was erected in this place, the noise continued to approach, and suddenly he saw a man who was ringing a bell, appear from behind an angle of the church. This was an *apparitore*; and behind him followed two horses, which, stretching out their necks, and every now and then stumbling forward, drew after them, with great difficulty, a cart filled with dead bodies; after the cart followed another — and then another — and another — and another. Beside the horses walked Monatti, who drove

them forward with stripes, blows, and curses. The corpses were for the most part naked, some few were badly wrapt up in wretched rags, all were heaped up, lying one upon another, and resembled a nest of vipers, which slowly uncurl themselves upon the approach of spring, for at each shock, at each stumble, these horrible masses were seen to tremble and separate in a hideous manner; heads dangled to and fro; the long hair of women floated in the air; arms released themselves and hung over the wheels, exhibiting to the already horrified spectator, how such a spectacle might become even yet more horrible.

Our poor youth had paused in a corner of the square, and prayed for the souls of these unknown dead. A dreadful thought rushed through his mind. "Perhaps there—there—together with these bodies, there, underneath them — O God, do not permit this to be! do not permit the very thought even!"

This fearful train having passed, Renzo moved away, traversed the square, and at length reached the bridge Marcellino, and at last arrives in the Borgo Nuovo. Looking before him always with the desire of seeing some one who could direct him, he saw at the very end of the street a priest in a doublet, with a long staff in his hand; he was standing close to a half-opened door, his head inclined towards the opening; in a short time Renzo saw the priest raise his hand, as if pronouncing a blessing. Conjecturing—as was the fact—that he had just ended confessing some one, Renzo said to himself, "This is the very man for me. If a priest, performing the vocation of a priest, has no spark of love, of charity, or of kindness, one must really say that there is no longer any virtue left in the world."

The priest meantime walked away from the door and approached Renzo, carefully keeping in the middle of the street. Renzo, when he had drawn near, raised his hat, and signing to him that he desired to speak, stood still at the same time, so as to inform the priest that he had no wish to approach nearer. The good priest stopped also, with the air of one who is inclined to listen, planting, however, at the same time, his staff before him, as though to form a bulwark. Renzo proffered his inquiry, regarding which the priest not only returned very satisfactory information, telling him the name of the street in which the mansion was situated, but also gave the poor youth ample directions, directions of which he perceived Renzo stood in much need.

“God preserve you in health now and in all times,” said Renzo; and whilst the good priest was about to continue his way, “another favour I have to request,” began Renzo, and told him about the poor woman who had been forgotten. The good man thanked Renzo for having afforded him this opportunity of performing a charitable deed which was thus urgently called for; and, saying that he would go and inform the proper authorities, continued his way.

Renzo also pursued his walk, and kept repeating to himself the various directions which had been given him; so as to learn them by heart, and thus not be obliged to inquire his way at every corner. But it is impossible to imagine how difficult this operation was, not so much from the difficulty of the thing itself, as owing to a fresh disquiet which had arisen in his soul. The name of the street, the indication of the road, had redoubled his alarms. It was what he had desired,

it was what he had requested, and was that without which he could have done nothing; no one had told him anything from which he could presage the least evil; but how was it? The idea of an end being put to his uncertainty, of the time being near when he should hear—"she is living"—or—"she is dead!" this idea, I say, so overpowered him, that in this moment he would rather have been still in uncertainty regarding every thing, nay, at the very outset of the journey which was now so near its termination. He collected his strength, and said to himself: "Ah! if I now begin to play the child, how will affairs go on?" And thus having encouraged himself, as best he could, he pursued his way, advancing into the city.

Renzo found himself precisely in one of the most desolate and squalid quarters; in that labyrinth of streets which bears the name of the *Carobio di porta Nuova*. The fury of the contagion, and the stench from the dead bodies scattered about, had been so great, that the few survivors had been obliged to take themselves off. Thus, whilst the passer-by was rendered melancholy by this air of neglect and desertion, his senses were unpleasantly affected by the signs and traces left behind by the former inhabitants. Renzo quickened his step, encouraging himself with the thought that the object of his search was still far off, and hoping that before he reached it, the scene would in some degree have changed. In a short time he reached a spot which might be considered the city of the living; but what a city! and what living beings! Most of the doors were closed, either from suspicion or terror; some few stood wide open, either because

the houses were uninhabited, or had been invaded; others were nailed or sealed up, owing to there being either dead or sick within; other houses were marked with a cross drawn in charcoal, as a sign to the Monatti that there were dead bodies there ready for them to fetch away. Everywhere were rags, and what was far more revolting than mere rags, old bandages, and infected straw or sheets flung from the windows; sometimes even corpses, either of people who had died suddenly in the streets, and who had been left lying there, until some cart should pick them up, or perhaps corpses which had been dropped from these very carts, or flung from the windows; so much had the duration and horror of the general calamity brutalized the soul, and caused men to forget every feeling of compassion, every social duty! All the noise of labour; all the rush of carriages; all the cries of vendors; all the hum of population, had ceased—it was rare that this silence of death was broken, except by the rolling of the funeral cars, by the lamentations of the poor, by the cries of the sick, by the yells of the delirious, or by the shouts of the Monatti. At dawn, at mid-day, and in the evening, a bell from the Cathedral tolled the hour for the recital of certain prayers which had been prescribed by the Archbishop; the bells from all the other churches responded; and then might be seen people appearing at the windows to pray in company—then might be heard a murmur of groans and prayers, which at once inspired a melancholy, mingled with some little hope.

Two-thirds of the inhabitants were already dead; a good part of the remainder had either taken flight or were fallen sick; the concourse of foot passengers

was reduced to a very small number, and in a long circuit you would not, except by some extraordinary chance, meet with a single individual in whom you would not notice something strange, something which indicated a melancholy change of circumstances. Men of the highest rank were seen without cloak or mantle, then a very essential part of their costume; the priests were without their robes, and even monks in simple doublets; in short, all people had cast off such garments, as with their long folds were liable to touch the ground or surrounding objects, and thus favour the anointers' diabolical schemes. Besides this desire to go about dressed in the most closely fitting garments possible, every one was neglectful of his person. Those who were accustomed to wear a long beard were now seen with it of the longest dimensions; whilst others, who had been formerly in the habit of shaving, now allowed their beards to grow, their hair also was long and neglected. This was occasioned not so much by that carelessness which naturally arises out of a long and general dejection, but was owing to the barbers having become a very suspicious race, ever since one of them had been arrested and condemned as a notorious anointer—we mean Giangiacomo Mora, whose name for a considerable time preserved an infamous celebrity, but who ought to be regarded with sentiments of the deepest and most lasting compassion. The greater number of the foot passengers carried a large stick, or even a pistol, in one hand, as a threatening admonition to such as chose to approach too near; in the other hand might be seen an odoriferous pastile, or a small globe of perforated wood or metal, containing a piece

of sponge soaked in prepared vinegar, which was applied to the nose every now and then, or perhaps kept constantly held to it. Some carried suspended round the neck a small phial filled with quicksilver, persuaded that mercury was able to absorb all pestilential effluvia; and they were very careful to renew the quicksilver every few days. Gentlemen now not only traversed the streets without their accustomed retinue, but might be seen with a basket on their arm going to purchase the necessaries of life. Friends, when they happened to meet in the street, saluted each other at a respectful distance with silent and hasty salutations. Every one, pursuing his way, had a deal to do in avoiding the disgusting remains with which the ground was strewn, and in some places entirely covered: every one endeavoured to keep in the middle of the street, and thus escape the filth and the melancholy burdens which were flung out of the windows; the venomous powders which, according to general report, were not unfrequently thrown down upon the passers-by; and also the walls, which might be anointed. Thus, ignorance, prudent and watchful in a wrong direction, now only increased the anxiety and misery, and occasioned false terrors, in compensation for the reasonable and salutary fears which she in the commencement had discarded.

Considering all the images of misery we have presented to our readers, and recollecting other objects still more sorrowful which yet remain undescribed, we will only pause here to mention briefly the sick who dragged themselves feebly along, or lay about the street—beggars, children, and women. This spectacle was so fearful that the spectators found almost

consolation in the thought which to posterity, or those removed from the terrible vision, appears always the most painful, in the thought, we would say, of to how small a number these sufferers were reduced.

Renzo had already walked a considerable way through this desolation, when he heard proceeding from a street along which he must shortly bend his course, a confused noise, in the midst of which might be distinguished the customary ringing of little bells.

Having arrived at the corner of this street, which was one of the widest in the city, he saw four carts standing in the middle of the way; and the movement about these carts was such as is seen in a grain-market, where there is a coming and going of men, a loading and unloading of sacks. Here were Monatti entering houses, Monatti issuing out again, laden with burdens which they placed in the carts. Some were clothed in their red apparel, others were without any distinctive mark; a still greater number with a mark still more hideous than their uniform—feathers and ribbons of various colours, which these wretches wore in the midst of the general mourning, as a sign of mirth. Now from one window, now from another, issued the dismal cry of “Here, Monatti!” and from the fearful stir proceeded a still more dreadful cry of “Here I am! here I am!” Or you heard the dwellers of the houses conjure the Monatti to make haste, and the Monatti reply with curses.

Having entered the street, Renzo lengthened his strides, and determined to avoid as much as possible this disgusting spectacle. His glance, however, fell upon an object of peculiar compassion, and he paused to contemplate it, almost without intending to do so.

There descended from one of these houses, and approached the melancholy train, a lady, whose appearance announced her early youth to be already past, but in her features might be traced a singular beauty, veiled and clouded, although not destroyed, by deep grief and the langour of death; in short, that soft and, at the same time, majestic beauty which belongs to the Lombard blood. She walked with difficulty, yet her step was firm; her eyes shed no tears, yet you saw that they had wept much; there was in her grief a certain tranquillity and depth which announced a soul entirely absorbed in its affliction. But it was not alone her appearance, which in the midst of so much misery made her a peculiar object of compassion, and revived this sentiment which had so long been dormant in the human heart. She bore in her arms a little girl of about nine years old, but she was dead. Her hair was parted over her cold forehead; she was arrayed in a robe of the purest white, as if adorned by her mother's hands for some festival which had long been promised, but which was now about to be celebrated. The lady held her upright on one arm; the child's bosom reposed upon hers; you would have said she still lived, had not a small hand, as white as wax, hung with an inanimate weight, and her head reposed upon the shoulder of her mother with an *abandon* stronger than that of sleep. Yes, truly, this was the mother! Even should the striking resemblance of these two countenances have failed to evince the fact, the expression depicted upon the living one would clearly have pronounced them mother and child.

A horrible Monatto hastened to remove the little

girl from her arm, betraying, however, an unusual respect, an involuntary hesitation. But the lady drawing herself back, without exhibiting either anger or scorn, said, "No, do not touch her; I must place her on the car myself; here, take this;" and opening her hand, she shewed the Monatto a purse, which she then dropped into his hand. "Promise me," she resumed, "not to touch a hair of her head, nor to allow any one else to do so, and to inter her just as she is."

The Monatto placed a hand upon his heart; and then, all eagerness, and almost with an obsequious manner, influenced more by the new sentiment which subdued him, than by the unexpected reward, he busied himself in making room in his cart, for this little corpse. The mother imprinted a kiss upon the child's forehead, placed her in the cart as though upon a bed, arranged her there, spread over her a white cloth, and addressed these last words to her: "Adieu, Cecilia! repose in peace! This evening we shall meet again, never more to be separated. Till then pray for us; for I will pray for thee and for the others." Then turning towards the Monatto, she said, "When you pass here towards evening, you will come and fetch me—I shall not be alone."

Having said this she returned into the house, and in a moment after appeared at a window, bearing a still younger child in her arms; the child lived, but there were signs of death in its countenance. She remained contemplating the unworthy obsequies of the poor Cecilia, until she could no longer discern the cart; and then disappeared. And now what remained for her but to place her only remaining

child upon the bed, and, lying down by its side, die with it; as the flower which proudly raises its head falls with the tender bud, under the sickle which levels all the grass of the field.

“O Lord!” exclaimed Renzo, “save her! take her to thyself, her, and that poor little creature! They have suffered enough! they have suffered enough!”

Having recovered from this extraordinary emotion, and whilst he was endeavouring to recollect the directions which had been given him, he heard another and very different noise, a confused sound of imperious cries, of hoarse lamentations, a weeping of women, a screaming of children.

Renzo pursued his way, his heart filled with its customary sad and obscure expectation. When he arrived at the corner of the street, he perceived a confused multitude advancing, and he paused to let it pass. These were sick people who were being conducted to the lazaretto; some, forcibly driven forward, resisted in vain, and cried in vain that they wished to die upon their own beds, replying with useless imprecations to the curses or commands of the Monatti who conducted them; others pursued their way in silence, without exhibiting grief or any other sentiment, like people who had lost their senses. There were women with infants in their arms, and young children, who, more terrified by these cries, by these commands, and by this company, than even by the prospect of death, implored permission to return to their mothers, to their homes. And, alas! perhaps the very mother whom they fancied they had left sleeping soundly had only flung herself on her bed, suddenly seized with the plague, and would lie there

deprived of all consciousness, until a cart should carry her away to the lazaretto or to the grave, if the cart should arrive somewhat later. Or perhaps a misfortune worthy of still more bitter tears! perhaps the mother wholly occupied with her sufferings has forgotten every thing, even her children, and has now only one thought—the desire to die in peace. However, in the midst of all this confusion, you might still see some examples of firmness and pity: there were fathers, mothers, brothers, daughters, husbands and wives, who sustained their beloved ones, and accompanied them on their way, soothing them with words of consolation; but it was not alone the adults who exhibited these virtues; little boys and girls guided the steps of their weaker brothers and sisters, and with the judgment and compassion belonging to a more advanced age counselled them to be obedient, and assured them that they were going to a place where all means would be employed for their recovery.

In the midst of the melancholy excited by such objects, our traveller was seized with a more lively solicitude, and one which touched him more nearly. The mansion which he sought must be close at hand, and if among these people — But the whole train having passed, and his doubt being set at rest, he turned towards a Monatto who followed, and inquired for the street, and for the house of Don Ferrante. “Curse thee, thou fool!” was the reply which he received. He did not trouble himself to reply; but perceiving a few paces off a commissary who brought up the train, and who had a somewhat more Christian face, he asked of him the same question. The com-

missary, pointing with his staff in the direction whence he came, said, "the first street to the right, the last great house on the left."

With a fresh anxiety in his heart, our youth proceeded in this direction. Now arrived in the street, he distinguished the mansion from among the other houses, which were meaner in appearance; he drew near the portal, which was closed, took hold of the knocker, and paused a moment in the greatest state of suspense. At length, however, he summoned courage and boldly knocked.

After a few moments a window opened a little, and a woman shewed herself and looked down to see who this might be, with a gloomy face which seemed to say, Are these Monatti vagabonds, commissaries, anointers, devils?

"Signora," said Renzo looking up, and with no very assured voice, "is there here in service a young country girl of the name of Lucia?"

"She is no longer here; go along with you," returned the woman, preparing to reclose the window.

"Only one moment for the love of God! She is no longer here? Where is she?"

"In the lazaretto;" and she was again about to close the window.

"Only one moment, for the love of heaven! With the plague?"

"Yes, is that anything new?—eh? go your ways."

"Oh, unfortunate that I am! Wait, was she very sick? How long is it since ——?" But this time the window had been closed in reality.

"Signora! Signora! one word for charity's sake! for love of your dead! I ask nothing that belongs to you; ah, me!" But it was like talking to the wall.

Afflicted by this intelligence, and irritated at this retreat, Renzo seized the knocker again, and thus standing close to the door, again raised it to give a violent knock, when he paused and held it suspended. In his agitation he turned round to see whether there were any neighbours from whom he might obtain more precise information, some explanation, some light upon the subject. But the only person he saw was another woman at the distance of about twenty paces. But she, with a countenance expressive of terror, hatred, impatience, and malice, with eyes which both sought to observe him and to gaze into the distance—opening her mouth as though to cry with all her might, yet restraining her breath, raising her two lean arms, and stretching forth her wrinkled talon-like hands as though to catch something, seemed desirous to call people to her without her intention being observed. When Renzo's glance fell upon her, she became still more hideous, and trembled like some one surprised in an evil deed.

“What the devil ——?” began Renzo, in his turn raising his arm towards the woman; but she having lost all hope that he would be seized upon unawares, let the cry which she had until then suppressed, escape her: “the anointer! fall upon him! fall upon him! fall upon him! fall upon the anointer!”

“Who? I! ah, lying sorceress! be silent!” shouted Renzo, and sprang towards her at once to frighten and silence her. But he soon found that there was more need to think of his own safety. At the screams of this woman people rushed from all sides; certainly not in such crowds as some months before would have been seen upon a similar occasion; but more than

sufficient to overpower a poor man. At the same time the window again opened, and the unpolite woman shewed herself and screamed, "Seize him! seize him! He must be one of the rogues who wander about anointing worthy people's doors."

Renzo did not pause to reflect: it seemed to him much the best to escape from them, instead of waiting there to argue; therefore he glanced to the right and left to see where were the fewest people, and then scampered off. He repulsed with a blow one man who opposed his passage; with a heavy blow of his fist struck back another who ran to meet him; and thus away he rushed, with a clenched fist raised in the air, ready to assail any one who came in his way. The road before him was clear, but behind was heard the sound of feet, and still louder than the noise of footsteps, the savage cry of, "Upon him! upon him! seize the anointer!" He knew not when he should be able to pause, or where he should find a place of safety. His anger became madness, his agony despair; his sight became obscured, he placed his hand upon his knife, drew it, paused, turned round, his countenance more grim and fierce than it had ever been before, and with his arms stretched out, brandishing the glittering blade, he cried, "Come on, such as have courage! Come on, ye rascals! I will anoint you truly with this."

But he saw with astonishment, and with a confused sentiment of pleasure, that his persecutors had already paused at some distance, and stood there continuing to shout, and make with their hands certain mad gestures in the air, as if to attract the attention of people who were far behind him. He again turned

round and saw a sight which his agitation had not before allowed him to see—a cart which advanced towards him—nay, a whole train of funeral cars with their usual attendants; and behind this train, at some distance, another crowd of people who also longed to fall upon the anointer, and thus inclose him on all sides; but they were also restrained by the same impediment. Seeing himself as it were between two fires, it suddenly occurred to him that what to others was an object of terror, might be for him a means of salvation; he thought that this was no time in which to be over nice, so, replacing his knife, he ran on towards the carts, passed the first, and perceived a good space unoccupied in the second. He formed his resolve, gave a spring, and is up in the cart, standing on the right foot, the left high in the air, and his arms raised above his head.

“Well done, well done!” exclaimed in one voice the Monatti, some of whom followed the convoy on foot, whilst others were seated upon the carts, or—to describe the horrible scene as it really was—even upon the corpses themselves, drinking out of a large flask which they passed round. “Well done, a good hit!”

“Thou art come to place thyself under the protection of the Monatti; believe thou art as safe as in a church,” said one of the two Monatti who stood in the cart into which Renzo had mounted.

His enemies, upon the approach of the train, had for the most part turned their backs and taken to their heels, never ceasing to cry, “Fall upon him, fall upon him, the anointer!” Some withdrew more slowly, and would every now and then turn round

with savage countenances and menacing gestures towards Renzo, who, from his cart, answered them by agitating his clenched fist in the air.

"Only leave me to manage," said a Monatto to Renzo, and suddenly tearing from a corpse a dirty rag, he knotted it up in haste, and taking it by one corner, raised it like a sling, and appeared about to fling it among the obstinate crowd, crying all the time, "Wait, rascals!" At this gesture, all fled seized with horror; and Renzo only saw the retreating backs of his enemies, and their heels, which were rapidly raised in the air.

Among the Monatti there arose a howl of triumph, a long and noisy burst of laughter.

"Ah, ah! see whether we know how to protect honest men!" observed a Monatto to Renzo: "one of us is worth a hundred of those poltroons."

"Certainly, I can say that I owe my life to you," replied Renzo; "and I thank you with all my heart."

"For what?" asked the Monatto; "thou deservest it; one can see that thou art a brave youth. Thou dost well to anoint this rabble; anoint them, extirpate them, for they are good for nothing, except when they are dead, they curse us for the life we lead, and say that, the plague once at an end, they will have us hanged. They will all be at an end before the plague, however; and the Monatti will be left to sing for victory, and make merry in Milan."

"Long live the plague, and perish the mob!" exclaimed another; and proposing this beautiful toast, he applied the flask to his mouth, and holding it fast to his lips, spite of the jolting of the cart, he took a

long draught, and then passed it on to Renzo, saying, "Drink our health."

"I wish it you with all my heart," returned Renzo, "but I am not thirsty; I have no great desire to drink just at the present moment."

"Thou hast had a good fright, it seems to me," said the Monatto; "thou hast the air of a peaceful man; thou shouldest have another air to play the anointer with."

"Every one does as well as he can," remarked the other.

"Give me to drink," said one of those who followed on foot beside the cart, "for I also wish to drink to the health of this good master, who finds himself in such good company — there, there, in this beautiful carriage."

And, with an atrocious and horrible laugh, he pointed to the cart which preceded the one in which poor Renzo stood. Then composing his countenance to a gravity even yet more grim and felonious, he made a low reverence towards the cart, and continued, "Do you permit, my dear master, a poor wretch of a Monatto to taste of your cellar? You see very well what manner of life we lead; we are those who have placed you in your carriage to conduct you to the country. Besides, wine soon makes your lordships ill; the poor Monatti have good stomachs."

And amidst the laughter of his companions, he took the flask and raised it to his lips; but before drinking he turned towards Renzo, and fixing his eyes upon him, said, with a certain insulting compassion, "The devil, with whom thou hast made thy compact, must needs be very young—for, if we had

not been here to save thee, he would have assisted thee finely." And then, amidst a fresh burst of laughter, he applied the bottle to his lips.

"And we—and we!" shouted more voices from the cart which preceded our hero. This scoundrel, after drinking as much as he chose, handed with both hands the large flask to his friends, who passed it from one to another, until one of them having emptied it, whirling it in the air several times, flung it upon the pavement, shouting, "Long live the plague!" After these words he began singing one of their infamous songs; and immediately he was accompanied by the voices of the whole horrible chorus. This infernal chanting, mingling with the ringing of the little bells, the sound of the wheels, and the tramp of the horses, resounded in the silent void of the streets, and echoed in the houses, painfully depressing the hearts of the few remaining inhabitants.

But may not sometimes even a disagreeable circumstance turn out to your advantage? The danger which Renzo had been in a moment before had rendered the company of these living and these dead more than tolerable; and now this music was almost agreeable to him, relieving him as it did from the annoyance of such a horrible conversation. Still very much troubled and excited, he, in his heart, returned thanks to Providence for having escaped out of this misfortune without having suffered any injury himself, or having himself injured any one; and he prayed that Providence would now assist him in liberating himself from his liberators. He was all alert, watching the Monatti, noticing the streets, so as to choose his time and quietly descend without giving them

occasion to make any noise, any scene which might excite the attention of passers-by.

All at once, upon turning a corner, he seemed to recognise the place; he looked about him more attentively, and felt sure that he was right. Do you know where he was? He was near the Eastern-gate, in that very street along which twenty months before he had walked so leisurely when entering Milan, and down which he had fled so quickly when departing. It directly occurred to him that this street led to the lazaretto, and his having been conducted to this very street without any exertion of his own, he considered an especial act of Providence, and regarded it as a good omen. Just at this point a commissary came towards the train of carts, shouting with all his might to the Monatti to stop. The train paused as it was commanded, and the song changed itself into a noisy dialogue. One of the Monatti who were in the cart with Renzo jumped to the ground; and Renzo saying to the other, "I thank you for your charity; God will reward you for it;" jumped down also.

"Go, go along with thee, poor wretch of an anointer," replied the Monatto; "thou art not the one who will destroy Milan."

Fortunately there happened to be no one near who heard what was said. The train had halted to the left of the road. Renzo quickly bent his steps in the opposite direction, and hastily hurried on to the bridge; having crossed it, he soon recognised the Capuchin convent, approached the gate, saw an angle of the lazaretto, passed through the outer fence, and then the exterior of this miserable enclosure lay before him. This scene gave scarcely any idea of the misery

contained within the walls, nevertheless it was a scene, vast, various, and almost impossible to describe. Along the two walls which from this point presented themselves to the eye of the spectator, was one continual stir; companies of sick people were being conducted to the lazaretto; others were seen seated or lying upon the banks of the deep ditch which surrounded the building: their strength had either proved insufficient to carry them within the asylum, or else issuing forth in despair, they had found themselves too weak to proceed. Other poor wretches wandered about like idiots, and not a few were raving mad; one stood all animated, relating his imaginations to another unfortunate who lay on the earth, oppressed with the disease; another was furious; another looked around with a joyous countenance, as though he were present at some merry spectacle. In the midst of this sad gaiety was heard a loud and continuous singing; the sound did not appear to proceed from this miserable crowd, and yet it was heard above all the other voices. It was a popular love song, gay and jocular, one of that class called by the Milanese *villanelle*. And had you, directed by the sound, cast your glance around, in order to discover who this could be who, in such a time and in such a place, was thus merry, you would have seen a poor wretch seated quietly in the bottom of the ditch, singing as loud as he could, and gazing into the sky.

Renzo had scarcely taken a few steps along the southern wall of the edifice before he heard an extraordinary noise among the multitude, and voices in the distance crying, "Take care, catch him!" Renzo stood on tip-toe, and saw a singular steed galloping

away, mounted by a still more singular rider. It was one of these madmen, who having seen this beast free and without any guard, standing near a cart, had mounted him in haste, without any saddle, and hammering his neck with his fist, and making spurs of his heels, dashed madly forward; Monatti followed behind, shouting with all their might; and all was enveloped in a cloud of dust which hurried along.

Thus, already confounded and wearied by all these sights of misery, our hero reached the gate of that building which enclosed within its walls perhaps more wretchedness assembled in one spot than he had met with throughout all the track he had traversed. He passed through the portal, and remained a moment motionless under the portico.

CHAPTER XXXV.

LET the reader only picture to himself the lazaretto peopled with sixteen thousand persons infected with the pest. The whole enclosure was entirely occupied, here with huts and tents, there with carts and people ; the two long ranges of porticoes, to the right and to the left, were crowded with the mingled dead and dying, extended upon sacks or upon straw ; and above this immense den of misery floated a dull murmur, something like the distant sound of waves. Here and there was a going and coming, a running about, a stooping down, a rising up, of the convalescents, of the sick, of attendants. Such was the spectacle which suddenly presented itself before Renzo, and riveted him to the spot, overpowered and agitated. We certainly do not here propose minutely to describe this spectacle, neither would any reader desire that we should ; but, following our youth upon his painful wandering, we will pause with him, and will describe as much of what he saw as will be necessary to understand what he himself did, and what happened to him.

From the gate where he had paused, as far as the little chapel which stood in the middle, the whole space seemed to be crowded with huts, and such-like impediments ; at a second glance, however, Renzo noticed that there was a moving to and fro of carts ;

a carrying away of property, so as to make more room: he saw Capuchins and laymen directing their operations, and at the same time sending away all such persons as had nothing to do there. Fearing himself to be driven forth after the same manner, he hid himself among the huts.

He went on from hut to hut, looking into each, and carefully observing all the beds which were placed in the open air, and examining every countenance, either exhausted by suffering, contracted by spasm, or motionless in death, in search of one countenance which he nevertheless dreaded to find. But having already gone a considerable way, and repeated many, many times this sad examination without having seen a single woman, he imagined the women must be lodged in a separate quarter. He encountered many of the attendants upon the sick; attendants as different in their appearance, manner, and apparel, as the principles were opposed, which had inspired them all with an equal strength, for the fulfilment of their separate vocations: in the Monatti the extinction of every sense of compassion—in the Capuchins a super-human compassion. But he preferred making no inquiries from either class; and deliberating whether he should proceed, went on until he succeeded in finding women. Pursuing his course, he did not cease looking around him; but from time to time he was obliged to withdraw his gaze, saddened by the spectacle of so much woe. But where could he turn, where rest his eyes, but upon fresh woe!

The very air and the heaven increased, if anything could, the horror of the scene. The heavy mass of cloud had gradually dispersed itself into smaller

clouds, which growing ever darker announced a tempestuous evening. In the midst of this heavy and gloomy sky appeared, as though seen through a thick veil, the disc of the sun, pale and without ray, and yet, diffusing around a faint and watery light, darted down a deadly and oppressive heat. Every now and then, amidst the continuous noise of this confused multitude, was heard the grumbling of thunder, deep but interrupted; listening, you would have been unable to distinguish out of which quarter it proceeded, or would even have been inclined to imagine it merely the distant rumbling of cart wheels, which suddenly ceased. In the surrounding country not a single leaf was seen to stir—not a bird to alight upon or quit a single tree; only the swallow might be observed suddenly above the roofs of the enclosure to dart with extended wings to the ground, as if to skim along the plain; but, terrified by the movement of the crowd, would rapidly ascend and fly away. It was that kind of weather in which, among a company of travellers, there is no one found to break the general silence: when the hunter pursues his way absorbed in thought, his gaze fixed upon the earth; when the peasant labouring in the fields unconsciously ceases his song; or, in short, that weather which is a forerunner of a tempest, when nature, motionless without, appears agitated by some internal convulsion, which oppresses every living being, adds an unspeakable weariness to every action, and makes even idleness and existence itself painful. But in this place, destined to suffering and death, human beings already seized with sickness sunk under this oppression—the unhappy victims were seen to sink by hundreds; the last

struggle was more painful—the groans more suffocating; perhaps never in this abode of woe had so cruel an hour as this been passed.

Already had our youth wandered a considerable way upon his fruitless search through this labyrinth of huts, when, amidst the variety of lamentations and confusion of the general hum, he began to distinguish a singular mixture of crying and bleating; at length he arrived at a wooden partition, from whence proceeded this extraordinary sound. Renzo placed an eye to a larger aperture formed between two planks, and looked into an enclosure which was scattered over with little huts; within which were seen—not the usual invalids—but infants lying upon mattresses, pillows, or sheets spread out; nurses and other women were busied about them. But what more than all the rest attracted and fixed the attention were she-goats mingling among the nurses, and acting as their assistants. This was, in short, a hospital for infants; such a one as was permitted by the place and by the times. It was, I say, a singular spectacle to see some of these animals standing quietly above the poor little creatures, and giving them to suck; whilst another goat, hearing a wail, would hasten to the spot with a maternal instinct, and pausing near the little innocent, would seek to place itself above its nursling, bleating and agitating itself, as if to call some one to the assistance of both.

Here and there were seated nurses with infants at the breast; some in such an attitude of love, that the question arose in the mind of the beholder, whether they had been attracted thither by the love of gain, or by that spontaneous charity which seeks the

afflicted and abandoned. One of them, wearied and exhausted, removed from her bosom a little wailing wretch, and sorrowfully went in search of a goat which would be better able to fulfil her vocation. Another, gazing with looks of compassion upon the nursling which had dropped asleep, and gently kissing it, went into a hut to lay it down upon a mattress. But a third, abandoned her bosom to the little stranger, not with an air of negligence, but of pre-occupation, and gazed into the heavens; and upon what did she meditate in such an attitude, with such a look? upon an infant whom she had given birth to, who perhaps but a little time before had drawn its nourishment from this same bosom; nay, who perhaps had expired upon it! Other women performed other offices. One ran towards a famished infant, and carrying it away in her arms, laid it down beside a she-goat which was feeding from a heap of fresh grass, and now by harsh words, now by caresses, sought to induce the inexperienced animal to perform its duty. Another ran to remove a poor little creature whom a goat, intent upon nourishing another nursling, trampled upon with her hoof; whilst this one carried her little foster-child up and down, rocking him in her arms, seeking now to lull him to sleep with a song, now to soothe him with gentle words, calling him by a name which she herself had given him. There now arrived a Capuchin with a long and very white beard, carrying two little wailing babes, one in either arm. He had brought them from their mothers, who had just expired. A woman ran to rescue them, and hastened, looking about among the crowd for some one who would take charge of them.

More than once Renzo, hurried on by his one all-absorbing thought, had moved from the loophole, but again he had looked in, and remained yet another moment.

At last, however, he again commenced his search, continuing to walk along the walls of this wooden enclosure until a number of small cabins, built up against the partition, obliged him to turn out of the way. Suddenly whilst he looks before him, studying his path, an unexpected, transient, instantaneous apparition passes before him, and fills his soul with tumultuous emotion. He sees, at about a hundred paces distant, a Capuchin appear and vanish among the tents—a Capuchin who, even at this distance, and seen thus hastily, had the whole appearance, the gait, the figure of Father Cristoforo. He rushed in search of the good friar in the most violent agitation, and wandering about, seeking him up and down, here and there, he at length with the greatest joy again beheld the form of the same friar. He saw him at a little distance walking away from a large cauldron, with a porringer in his hand; he saw him seat himself at the entrance of a hut, make the sign of the cross over the porringer which he held before him, and glancing around him with the air of one who is always on the alert, begin to eat. It was in truth the Father Cristoforo.

His history from the point where we lost sight of him until the present time will be related in two words. He had never quitted Rimini, nor had ever thought of quitting it, until the plague breaking forth in Milan afforded him the opportunity which he had always desired, the opportunity of giving his life for

his neighbour. He besought with much earnestness to be summoned thither to assist and serve those who were attacked by the plague. The uncle, the Count, had died; and in fact, at the present moment, there was a greater necessity for attendants upon the sick than for politicians; therefore his request was granted without the slightest difficulty. He immediately came to Milan, and had now been there about three months.

But the joy which Renzo experienced upon meeting again with the friar was only perfect for one moment; even in the very glance which he gave to ascertain whether this were really he, Renzo saw how much the good man was altered. His person was bowed and thin; his countenance thin also and deathly: you saw an exhausted nature, a failing and broken down frame, which was only sustained by a power of the soul.

He also fixing his gaze upon the youth who approached, and not daring to raise his voice, sought by gestures to make himself known. "Oh, Father Cristoforo!" exclaimed Renzo, as soon as he was near enough to be heard without raising his voice.

"Thou, here!" said the friar, placing the porringer upon the ground, and rising from his seat.

"How are you, Father? how are you?"

"Better than many unfortunates whom thou seest here," replied the friar; and his voice was feeble, exhausted, changed like all the rest. His eyes alone were as they had formerly been, nay, were even still more lively and splendid; as though Love, elevated even by the danger of her work, had replaced, by a more ardent and purer flame, the fire which Weakness was gradually extinguishing.

"But thou," pursued the Father, "how art thou? why hast thou thus come to dare the plague?"

"I have already had it, thanks be to heaven. I come —— in search of —— Lucia."

"Lucia! is Lucia here?"

"She is here: at least, I hope to God that she may still be here."

"Is she thy wife?"

"O my dear Father! no, alas! she is not my wife. Do you know nothing of all that has occurred?"

"No, my son; since God removed me from you, I have heard nothing more; but now that He has sent thee to me, I can assure thee that I should very much like to know all. But——the banishment?"

"You know then all that they did to me?"

"But thou, what hast thou done?"

"Listen: if I were to say that I was prudent that day in Milan, I should tell a lie; but I have committed no evil deed."

"I believe thee, and I even believed this before."

"Now then, I can tell you all."

"Wait a moment," said the friar; and he took a few steps out of the hut, calling 'Father Vittore!' After a few minutes a young Capuchin appeared, whom Father Cristoforo addressed, saying, "do me the kindness, Father Vittore, to watch for me over our poor patients, whilst I remain here a short time; but, nevertheless, if any one wants me, let me be called. Especially that man, if he give the slightest sign of returning consciousness, inform me immediately."

"Do not fear," replied the young man; and then the old man turned towards Renzo, "let us enter,"

said he to him. "But," added he suddenly, and paused—"it appears to me that thou art exhausted; thou must be hungry."

"So I am," said Renzo, "now that you make me think of it; I remember that I have not yet broken my fast."

"Wait," said the friar; and taking another porringer, he went to fill it out of the caldron, returned, and presented it to Renzo with a spoon, making him sit down upon a sack that served him for a bed. He then went to a cask which stood in one corner, drew some wine from it, and placed it upon a small table before his guest. He then took his own porringer, and seated himself beside Renzo.

"O Father Cristoforo!" exclaimed the youth, "is it then proper for you to do such things? But you are always the same. I thank you truly from my heart."

"Do not thank me," said the friar; "this is the property of the poor; but in this moment thou also art one of the poor. But now tell me all that I do not know, tell me about our poor Lucia, and try to tell it in a few words, for there is but little time, and there is a deal to be done, as thou mayst see."

Renzo commenced between one spoonful and another to relate Lucia's history; how she had been received into the monastery at Monza; how she had been carried off—— At these images of her sufferings and dangers, and at the thought that he himself had conducted the poor innocent girl to this place—the good friar remained breathless; but he breathed again, hearing how she had been miraculously liberated, had returned to her mother, and been placed with the Donna Prassede.

“Now I will tell you about myself,” said Renzo; and he briefly related the adventures of the fatal day in Milan, and his flight; how he had lived, removed from his home; and how, every thing being now in confusion, he had risked going to his native place; how he had not been able to find Agnese; and how he had learned in Milan that Lucia was at the lazaretto. “And here I am,” he concluded, to seek for her, to see whether she still lives, and whether —— she will have anything to say to me — for —— sometimes.”

“But,” asked the friar, “hast thou any knowledge of where she has been placed—of when she came here?”

“None, my dear Father; I only know that she is here, if she still lives.”

“Oh, my poor son! but what search hast thou made here?”

“I have wandered up and down, but I have seen scarcely anything but men. I have thought that the women must be in a separate quarter, but I have not been able to reach it; if it is so, you will be able to tell me.”

“Dost thou not know, my son, that all men are prohibited from entering, all who have no commission?”

“Well, and what could happen to me?”

“This law is just and wholesome, my dear son; and if the excessive misery prevents its being observed in its full rigour, is this a reason that an honest man should transgress it?”

“But, Father Cristoforo!” exclaimed Renzo—
“Lucia ought to be my wife; you know how we have

been separated; it is already twenty months that I have suffered; I have borne my sufferings patiently; I have risked many things in coming here, and now——”

“ I do not know what to say,” replied the friar, replying rather to his own thoughts than to the youth’s words: “ Thou art come here with good intentions, and would to God that all those who have free access to this place would conduct themselves as I feel sure that thou wilt conduct thyself. God, who certainly will bless thee for this thy constancy, thy perseverance, in desiring and seeking after her whom he gave thee, God, who is more rigorous than men, yet at the same time more indulgent, will not regard what there may be irregular in thy manner of seeking her. Only recollect, that we shall both of us have to render account of thy conduct in this place; to men, perhaps not, but to God without doubt. Come here,” and saying this, he rose, as did Renzo also immediately, who having listened attentively to all the good friar’s words, had, nevertheless, at the same time taken counsel with himself and determined, as had been his first intention, not to mention Lucia’s promise. “ If he were to hear this,” thought he to himself, “ he would certainly discover some other difficulty. Oh, if I find her, we shall have plenty of time to discuss the matter; or —— and then —— what use would it be ?”

Having led him to the entrance of the hut, the friar continued; “ Listen, our Father Felice, who is the president of the lazaretto, conducted the few who have recovered to a certain quarter, where they are to observe the quarantine. Thou canst see the church

there in the middle of the enclosure;" and raising his lean and trembling hand, he indicated to the left the cupola of the chapel, which towered above the miserable tents; and then continued, "there they will assemble, to issue forth in procession through the gate by which thou must have entered."

"Ah! then it was for this that people were so busy clearing the way."

"Yes, certainly; and thou must also have heard the tolling of a bell."

"Yes, I have."

"This is the second time it has tolled; the third time they will be all assembled; the Father Felice will address a short discourse to them, and then will depart with them. Go there also; seek to place thyself behind the people, on one side of the road, where, without disturbing any one or being remarked, thou canst see them pass by—and see —— and see whether she is there. If God has not permitted this to be; this side," and here he again raised his hand, pointing to that side of the edifice which was in front of them—"this side of the edifice and a portion of the field beyond are assigned to the use of the women. Thou wilt perceive a kind of palisade which separates the two quarters, it is interrupted and open in some places, so that thou wilt experience no difficulty in entering. When thou art once within, if thou dost give offence to no one, most probably no one will address a word to thee. If, however, thou shouldst meet with any obstacle, only say that the Father Cristoforo da —— knows thee, and will render account of thy conduct. Seek for her with faith and —— with resignation. For remember, that it is no small

thing thou art come to seek here; thou dost seek a living person in the lazaretto! Ah, if thou didst only know how many times I have seen this population renewed! how many I have seen borne away! how very few issue forth!—— Go prepared to offer a sacrifice ——”

“Yes, I understand!” interrupted Renzo, his eyes flashing, and his whole countenance changed; “yes, I understand! I go; I will look, I will seek her in every place, again and again, throughout the whole lazaretto, up and down —— and if I do not find her ——”

“And if thou dost not find her?” asked the friar, with a serious air, and a look full of admonition.

But Renzo, whose anger had been rekindled by this doubt, was wholly blinded by his passion, and continued, “If I do not find *her*, I shall manage to find some one else. Either in Milan, in his own wicked palace, at the end of the world, or in the devil’s house, I will meet with this scoundrel who has separated us; with this rascal, without whom Lucia would have been mine these twenty months; and then, if we had been destined to die, at least we should have died together. If this villain yet lives, I will find him ——”

“Renzo!” cried the friar, seizing him by the arm, and regarding him yet more severely.

“And if I find him,” continued Renzo, still blinded by passion, “if the plague has not already done justice — It is no longer the time when a poltroon, surrounded by his followers, may with impunity drive honest people to despair, and then laugh at them: the time has arrived when men meet face to face; and —— I will do justice!”

“Unhappy youth!” cried Father Cristoforo, with a voice which had assumed all its former strength and depth, “unhappy youth!” and his bowed head was raised; his cheeks coloured themselves with their ancient life, and his eyes sparkled with an almost terrific fire. “Behold, unfortunate!” and whilst he held, and violently shook Renzo’s arm with one of his hands, he pointed with the other towards as much of the melancholy scene as lay before them. “Behold, it is He who chastises! It is He who judges, and is not judged! It is He who scourges, and yet pardons! But thou worm of the earth, *thou* desire to do justice! Thou—dost thou know what justice is? Go, unfortunate one, go! I will hope —— I have hoped, that before I die, God would give me the consolation of hearing that my poor Lucia was alive; nay, would permit me perhaps to see her, and hear her promise that she would send a prayer towards this grave where I shall repose. Go, thou hast destroyed my hope. God has not left her on earth for thee; and surely, thou art not audacious enough to fancy thyself worthy to be consoled by God. He will think of her, for she is one of those for whom are reserved the joys of eternity. Go! I have no longer time to attend to thee.”

And saying this, he flung Renzo’s arm away from him, and bent his steps towards a cabin of the sick.

“Ah, Father!” said Renzo, following him with a supplicating air, “will you send me away in this manner?”

“How?” resumed the Capuchin in a no less severe voice. “Art thou daring enough to imagine that I should steal the time of these afflicted ones, who expect that I shall speak to them of the pardon of

God, merely to listen to thy mad words, to thy proposals of vengeance? I listened to thee when thou didst ask for consolation and assistance; I abandoned charity, for charity; but now that thy heart is full of vengeance, what hast thou to do with me? Go! I have seen expire here, the injured who have pardoned their injurers; injurers who have groaned and lamented that they could no longer humble themselves before those they had offended; I have wept with both; but with thee what have I to do?"

"Ah, I pardon him! I pardon him, in truth, I pardon him for ever!" exclaimed the youth.

"Renzo!" said the friar, with a calmer severity; "reflect a little, and tell me how many times thou hast pardoned him."

The Capuchin receiving no reply for some time, suddenly bowed his head, and in a still calmer voice continued, "thou knowest wherefore I wear this habit."

Renzo hesitated.

"Thou knowest!" resumed the old man.

"I know," replied Renzo.

"I also was filled with hatred: I who have reprimanded thee for a thought, for a word. The man whom I cordially hated, whom I hated for a long time, I have murdered."

"Yes, but he was an oppressor, one of those——"

"Hush!" interrupted the friar: "if this were a good reason, dost not thou think I should have discovered it in these thirty years? Ah! if I could only infuse now into thy heart the sentiment which I have ever since and still experience for the man I hated—if I could—I——but God can. He will! Listen, Renzo: He wishes thee more happiness than thou canst wish for thyself; thou hast been able to scheme vengeance

but He has sufficient power, and sufficient mercy, to prevent thee from putting it into execution. Thou knowest well, thou hast many times said that He is able to arrest the arm of the oppressor; but know also that He is able to stay the arm of the vindictive. And because thou art poor, because thou art injured, dost thou believe that He is not able to defend a man whom He has created after his image? Dost thou believe that He will permit thee to do all thou dost desire? No! But dost thou know what He can do? He can hate thee, and condemn thee! He can, owing to this sentiment which animates thee, remove from thee every blessing! For, in whatever manner thy affairs may go on, whatever fortune may be thine, recollect that all will be chastisement, until thou shalt have pardoned him so completely that thou no longer canst say—I pardon him.”

“Yes, yes,” said Renzo, very much moved, and filled with confusion, “I feel that I have never really pardoned him; I feel that I have spoken as a brute, and not as becomes a Christian; and now, with the grace of God, I pardon him truly from my heart.”

“And if thou shouldst see him?”

“I would pray the Lord that He would give me patience, and would touch his heart.”

“Thou shouldst recollect that the Lord has told us not alone to pardon, but to love our enemies! Thou shouldst recollect that He has so loved his, as to die for them!”

“Yes, with His aid, I will endeavour to do His will.”

“Well, come with me. Thou hast said: I will find him, and thou shalt. Come, and behold him whom thou couldst continue to hate, him for whom thou

couldst desire evil, and against whose life thou wouldst arm thyself." And taking Renzo's hand, he pressed it with all the vigour of a young man, and then moved away. Renzo not daring to question anything, followed him.

After a few steps, the friar paused near the entrance of a hut, fixed his eyes upon Renzo's countenance with a mingled gravity and tenderness, and then entered with him.

The first thing which met their eyes was a sick man seated upon some straw; a sick man who was no longer in danger, nay, who even appeared almost convalescent. As soon as he saw the Father, he shook his head, as if to say, no; the Father bowed his with an air of sadness and resignation. Renzo meanwhile cast his eyes upon the surrounding objects with a restless curiosity; he observed three or four other sick people, and distinguished one in particular lying in a corner upon a mattress, wrapped in a sheet, with a gentleman's cloak flung over him by way of coverlet; Renzo regarded this figure attentively, and recognising Don Rodrigo, stepped back. But the friar again strongly pressing his arm, drew him to the foot of the couch, and stretching forth his arm, pointed to the man who lay there.

The unfortunate lay there motionless; his eyes were wide open, but without any expression; the countenance was pale, and here and there was seen a black spot; the lips were also black and swollen; it would have appeared the countenance of a corpse, had not a violent contraction given signs of a tenacious life. The chest heaved every now and then with a painful respiration; the right hand uncovered by the

cloak, was seen pressed to his heart; the fingers were all livid, and black at the ends.

"Thou seest!" said the friar, in a low and solemn tone, "This may be a chastisement; this may be a mercy. The same sentiment which thou dost now feel for this man who has offended thee, God will feel towards thee at the day of reckoning. Bless him, and thou shalt be blessed. Four days has he lain here in the state thou seest him, without giving any sign of consciousness. It may be the Lord is inclined to grant him an hour of repentance, but desires to be besought for it by thee; perhaps He desires that thy prayers should be mingled with those of our innocent Lucia; perhaps He will reserve this grace for thy prayers alone, for the prayers of an afflicted and resigned heart. Perhaps the salvation of this man's soul and of thy own, now alone depends upon thee, upon thy sentiment of pardon, of compassion, of love."

He was silent; and joining his hands, he bowed his head above them and prayed; Renzo did the same.

They had remained a few moments in this attitude when the third tolling of the bell was heard. They both moved away as if in concert, and issued forth. They neither of them either demanded questions or made protestations, their countenances alone spoke.

"Go," said the friar, "go prepared to praise God, let it be either in receiving a mercy or in making a sacrifice. Praise God, whatever may be the issue of thy search. And whatever it may be, come and bring me tidings; we will together praise Him."

Here, without anything more being said, they separated; one returned whence he had come, the other proceeded towards the chapel, which was about a hundred paces distant.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Who could have told Renzo, a few hours previously, that in the very midst of such a quest, at the commencement of the most dubious and decisive moment, his heart would have been divided between Lucia and Don Rodrigo? Yet so it was: this pale countenance mingled itself with all the dear and terrible images which hope or fear alternately presented to his mind during his short walk; the words heard at the foot of that bed, were heard in the midst of the painful uncertainty which filled his soul. He was unable to terminate a prayer for the happy issue of his great enterprise without completing the one which he had commenced at the foot of Don Rodrigo's couch, and which the tolling of the bell had interrupted.

The octangular chapel which arose, elevated upon a low flight of steps in the centre of the lazaretto, was, in its primitive form, open on all sides, without any other support than the pilasters and columns—an openwork fabric, if one may be allowed the expression; each side was composed of an arch between two intercolumniations. Within, surrounding what might properly be termed the church, ran another portico, composed of eight arches, which corresponded with the outer ones; above these arches rose a cupola; thus, the altar which was erected in the centre, might

be seen from every window of the lazaretto, and from every part of the enclosure. This edifice being now converted to quite a different use, the openings have been walled up; but the ancient framework remaining untouched, clearly indicates its former state and destination.

Renzo had scarcely arrived when he saw the Father Felice appear in the portico of the chapel, and place himself in the archway which looked towards the city, and before which the company had assembled in the plain; and by the Father's attitude, Renzo perceived that he had already begun to preach. He hastened to place himself behind the auditory, as had been suggested to him. He quietly paused, and hastily ran his eye over the assembly; but from where he stood he could only see a crowd, one might almost say a pavement of heads. In the midst were seen a number of heads covered with handkerchiefs or veils, and in this direction he gazed most attentively; but not succeeding in discovering anything more, he raised his eyes towards the same object which attracted the eyes of the whole assembly.

Renzo was touched and filled with awe at the venerable preacher's aspect; and he listened to this portion of his solemn address with as much attention as remained to him in such a moment of expectation.

"Let us give one thought to the thousands who have gone forth through yonder gate;" and he, raising his finger, indicated over his shoulder the gate which led to the cemetery of San Gregorio, which might then be called an immense grave. "Let us cast one glance upon the thousands who still remain here, uncertain by which gate they shall issue forth: let us

cast one glance upon ourselves, this small number who are saved. Bless the Lord. Bless Him for His justice! bless Him for His mercy! bless Him for death! bless Him for health! bless Him for the choice which He has made of us! Oh my children, wherefore should this have been, but to preserve for Himself a chosen people, corrected by affliction and animated with gratitude? That we, now feeling more keenly that life is His gift, should regard it with that esteem which as a gift from Him it deserves, and that we should employ it in such a manner as may be acceptable to Him. That the memory of our own sufferings may render us compassionate and full of love towards others who suffer. That those in company with whom we have suffered, hoped and feared; among whom we leave friends and relatives, and who in short are our brethren; that these, I say, when they see us depart from among them, whilst perhaps receiving some consolation in the thought that some few leave this place restored, may at the same time be edified by our behaviour. God does not wish that they should observe in us a noisy joy, a worldly joy, in having escaped this death, this death against which they still wrestle. Let them see that we depart, returning thanks for ourselves, and praying for them, and may be able to say, 'Even when our friends are far from us, they will remember us, and pray for us poor wretches.' Let us commence with this short journey, with the first steps we are about to take, a life full of charity. Let those who have recovered their former vigour lend a brotherly arm to the weak; youths sustain your elders; you who remain childless, look around and behold how many children are left

without parents—become parents to them! And this charity covering your sins, will also soften your griefs.”

Here a dull murmur of groans and sobs, which had continued to increase among the audience, was suddenly suspended, upon the preacher's placing a rope round his neck and falling upon his knees: all remained in the most profound silence, awaiting the words he should speak.

“For myself,” said he, “and for all my companions, who, without any merit of our own, have been chosen to the high duty of serving Christ in you; I humbly demand pardon, if we have not worthily fulfilled so high a mission. If the indolence of the flesh should have rendered us less attentive to your necessities, less ready at your call; if any unjust impatience, any culpable weariness, should have caused us to appear sometimes before you with a wearied or severe countenance; if, at any time, the miserable thought that you stood in need of us, should have led us not to treat you with becoming humility; if our frailty should have caused us to commit any action which has given you pain, pardon us! God pardon in the same manner your transgressions, and bless you!” Saying this, he made the sign of the cross above the audience, and then arose.

We have been able to report, if not the precise words, at least the sense of what he said; but the manner with which these words were uttered, is not a thing to be described. It was the manner of a man who pronounced it a privilege to serve the sick, because he really considered it as such; who confessed he had not worthily fulfilled his mission,

because he truly believed he had not worthily fulfilled it; who besought pardon, because he was fully persuaded he stood in need of it. Only imagine then with what sobs, what tears, the people replied to these words, they who had seen around them these Capuchins alone occupied in attending upon them; who had seen so many of them perish; and who had seen this man who spoke in the name of all, ever the first in exertion as well as in authority, except when at the point of death himself. The excellent Friar then took a large cross, which was leaning against a pillar, raised it before them, left his sandals in the outer portico, descended the steps, and moving through the crowd, who respectfully made way for him, placed himself at the head.

Renzo, in tears, neither more nor less than if he had been one of those from whom this singular pardon had been asked, also retired and placed himself at one side of a hut. There he waited, half concealed, his head thrust forward, his eyes wide open, his heart palpitating violently, yet at the same time filled with a peculiar faith, given rise to, I believe, by the tenderness which the sermon had called forth in him, and by the spectacle of the general emotion.

And now arrived the Father Felice, barefoot and with this rope round his neck, with this high and heavy cross raised on high; his was a pale and thin countenance, one which at once breathed compunction and courage; he moved along with a slow, but resolute step, like one who alone thinks of sparing the weakness of others; and in every thing he had the appearance of a man upon whom fatigue and pain have conferred the

strength necessary for the performance of his arduous duty. Immediately after him followed the elder children, most of them barefoot, very few of them entirely clothed; a few even in their shirts. Then came the women; almost all of them conducting by the hand a little child, and singing alternately the *Miserere*; the weak sound of their voices, the paleness and the languor of their countenances, were things which would have filled with compassion the soul of a simple spectator. But Renzo looked, examined every group, every countenance, without passing a single one over; for the procession proceeded very slowly, so as to accommodate every one. They passed and passed, and he looked and looked, but it was all in vain; he cast glances towards the line which had not yet come up; there were but very few remaining; now the very last has arrived; they are all passed! they were all unknown countenances! With his arms dangling by his sides, with his head inclining over one shoulder, he accompanied this multitude with his eyes, whilst the train of men passed before him. His attention was again excited, a new hope sprang up within him, when he perceived that after the men, appeared certain carts, in which were placed those who were not yet in a condition to walk. Here the women were the last; the train passed so slowly that he was enabled equally well to examine all the countenances without missing a single one. But what happened? he examined the first cart, the second, the third, and, in fact, all with the same result, until the very last arrived, behind which walked, as regulator of the convoy, another Capuchin with a severe air, and a staff in his hand.

This was Father Michele, whom we have already mentioned as the companion of the Governor Father Felice.

Thus then had vanished this dear hope; and in vanishing, had not alone carried away the consolation which it had brought him, but, as often happens, left him in a more deplorable case than before. Now the very best thing he could hope for was to discover Lucia sick. Nevertheless, uniting to the ardour of a present hope something of his fear, which had just been increased, he attached himself with all the powers of his soul to this melancholy and weak thread; he entered the road, and hastened in the direction from whence the procession had come. When he had arrived at the foot of the chapel, he knelt down upon the lowest step, and offered up a prayer to God, or rather a confusion of incoherent words, of interrupted phrases, of exclamations, of entreaties, of lamentations, of promises; one of those discourses which are never held with men, because men have neither sufficient penetration to understand, nor patience to hear them; neither are men sufficiently great to feel compassion for the petitioners, unmingled with contempt.

He arose encouraged; he walked round the chapel, found himself in the other road, which he had not yet seen, and which led to the other gate. After taking a few steps, he saw the enclosure of stakes which the friar had mentioned to him, and which was broken here and there as his informer had told him. Almost at the first step he took he saw lying upon the ground a little bell, such as the Monatti were accustomed to wear upon one foot: it occurred to Renzo that this little instrument might serve him as a passport; he took it,

looked around to see whether any one observed him, and fastened it upon his foot. He now began his search, a search which would have been terribly laborious, even from the multitude of objects, had the objects been of quite another class. He contemplated fresh scenes of misery, in some respects similar to the misery he had before witnessed; in other respects different: for, afflicted by the same calamity, there was here quite a different suffering, so to say, quite another languor, another lamentation, another mode of supporting pain, and of pitying and succouring each other by turns. These scenes excited in the mind of the spectator quite another compassion—quite another horror.

He had already proceeded, I do not know how far, fruitlessly, yet without meeting with any accident, when he suddenly heard behind him an “Oh!” a cry which appeared to be addressed to him. He turned, and saw at a certain distance a commissary, who raising one hand, signed to him and shouted, “There, in that chamber, they have need of help: here, they have quite finished cleaning.”

Renzo immediately perceived that he had been taken for a Monatto, and that the bell had caused the mistake. He called himself a fool for having only reflected upon the embarrassments which this distinctive mark would enable him to escape, and not upon those which it was likely to draw upon him; but at the same time he considered how he could immediately free himself from this man. Renzo returned a sign with his head, as if giving him to understand that he had heard and would obey; and then immediately, to escape out of sight, hastened among the huts.

When it appeared to Renzo that the man was far enough away, he thought of delivering himself from the cause of his annoyance, and wishing to perform this little operation without being observed, he placed himself in a small open space between two huts, which, if we may be allowed the expression, turned their backs upon each other. He bent down to remove the bell, and bending with his head thus leaning against the straw wall of one of these huts, there reached his ear a voice — oh, heaven! is it possible? All his soul is in his ears: his breathing is suspended — Yes, yes! it is her voice!

“For fear of what?” said this gentle voice: “We have passed through something far worse than a tempest. He who has watched over us until now, will watch over us henceforth.”

If Renzo did not send forth a cry, it was not from fear of being discovered, but because he wanted breath. His knees failed him, his sight became troubled; but this was only the first moment; a moment after, and he was standing upright, brisker, more vigorous than ever; in three springs he was at the entrance of the cabin, he saw the one who had spoken, he saw her risen and stooping over a bed. She turned round at the noise; looked—believed she deceived herself, that it was a dream—look again more attentively—and cried, “Oh! blessed God!”

“Lucia! I have found you! I have found you! It is really you! You are alive!” exclaimed Renzo, advancing, and trembling violently.

“Oh, blessed Lord!” replied Lucia, who trembled yet more violently: “You? what is all this? in what manner? why? The plague!”

“ I have had it. And you —— ?”

“ Ah!—I also have had it. And my mother—— ?”

“ I have not seen her because she was at Pasturo; I believe, however, that she is well. But you —— How pale you are still! How weak you appear! But you are cured, are you not? you are cured?”

“ The Lord has thought fit to leave me here below. Ah, Renzo, why are you here?”

“ Why?” said Renzo, approaching still nearer; “ you ask me why? Why should I come? Is there any need that I should tell you? Who is there for me to think about? Am I no longer called Renzo? Are you no longer Lucia?”

“ Ah, what do you say; what do you say? Has not my mother written to you that —— ?”

“ Yes; she has only written too much to me. Fine things, certainly, to have written to a poor unfortunate, overwhelmed with trouble, and a fugitive; to a young man, I say, who has never done anything to offend you.”

“ But Renzo, Renzo; since you knew—why did you come? why did you?”

“ Why did I come? Oh, Lucia, why did I come, you ask me? After so many promises. Are we no longer ourselves? do you no longer recollect? What is then wanting to us?”

“ O, Lord!” exclaimed Lucia, sadly, joining her hands, and raising her eyes towards heaven; “ wherefore hast thou not mercifully taken me to thyself —— ! O, Renzo! what have you done? Only see; I began to hope that—with time—I should have forgotten —— ”

“ A fine hope! fine things to say to one’s very face!”

“Ah, what have you done? And in this place! In the midst of so much misery; in the midst of such spectacles! Here, where there is nothing but death, you have been able ——!”

“Those who die must pray to God for themselves, and hope that they shall go to a better world; but it is not just on that account that those who live should live in despair ——”

“But Renzo, Renzo, you do not think of what you are saying. A promise to the Madonna! A vow.”

“And I tell you that there are promises which count for nothing.”

“Oh, God! What is it you say? Where have you been all this time? With whom have you had intercourse? What do you mean?”

“I speak as a good Christian; and it is I who have a better opinion of the Madonna than you; for I do not believe that she would desire promises which would injure any human being. If the Madonna had spoken herself, oh, then it would have been otherwise. But how did it happen? it was merely one of your ideas. Do you know what you ought to promise the Madonna? You ought to promise that the first daughter we have shall be called Maria, for I am ready myself to promise this; these are things which do the Madonna far more honour; these are acts of devotion which are much more sensible, and injure no one.”

“No, no; do not speak thus: you do not know what you say. You do not know what it is to make a vow; you have not been placed in such circumstances; you have not experienced what I have. Go, go, for the love of heaven!” And saying this she hastily drew back, and turned towards the bed.

“ Lucia!” said Renzo, without moving, “ tell me, at least tell me, whether if there were not this reason —— you would be the same to me as ever?”

“ Heartless man,” returned Lucia, turning round, and with difficulty restraining her tears; “ when you will have made me say useless words, words which will pain me, words which may perhaps be sinful, shall you then be satisfied? Leave me, oh! leave me. Forget me; it is evident that we were not destined for each other. We shall meet again above. I have not long to remain in this world. Go; seek to inform my mother that I have recovered; that even here God has succoured me; that I have found a good soul, this excellent woman, who is as a mother to me; tell her that I hope she will be preserved from this evil, and that we shall see each other again, when and how God pleases —— Go, for the love of heaven, and only think of me when you pray to the Lord.”

And, like one who has nothing more to say, and will neither hear anything more; like one who would escape some danger, she retired still closer to the bed, in which lay the woman of whom she had spoken.

“ Listen, Lucia, listen!” said Renzo, without, however, approaching her.

“ No, no; leave me for charity.”

“ Listen; the Father Cristoforo ——”

“ Who?”

“ Is here.”

“ Here? where? How do you know this?”

“ I have spoken with him but just now. I was a little while with him; and a religious man of his description, it seems to me ——”

"He is here!—it will be to assist the sick, most certainly. But he? Has he had the plague?"

"Oh, Lucia! I fear, I fear only too much ——" And whilst Renzo hesitated pronouncing these words which were so full of sorrow for himself, and would be so to Lucia, she had again come forward from the bed and drew near him: "I fear that he now has it!"

"Oh, the unfortunate, good man! But what did he say? Alas! how is he? is he in bed? is he attended?"

"He is up, and active, attending upon others. But if you only saw him, saw his colour—how he carries himself! One has seen so very many—only too many alas!—that one cannot deceive oneself!"

"Oh! unfortunate people that we are! And he is really here?"

"Here, and at but a short distance; not more distant than from your house to mine—if you recollect ——"

"Oh, holy Virgin!"

"Well, but little farther off. And only think whether we have talked about you! He has told me things ——! And if you only knew what he has shewn me! You shall hear all; but just now I must begin by telling you what he told me first of all with his own mouth. He told me that I did well in coming to seek you, and that it pleased the Lord when a youth acted after this manner, and that the Lord would assist me in finding you; as He has, in truth, done; but really, Fra Cristoforo is a saint. Thus you see ——!"

"But if he spoke thus, it was because he did not know that ——"

“What would you have him know of the things which you have done in your own mind, without any reason, or the advice of any one? An excellent man, a man of judgment, such as he is, does not think about things of that sort. Ah, but what he shewed me!” And here Renzo related the visit they had paid to a certain hut. Lucia, much as her senses and her soul must have become familiarized with ideas of terror since her abode in this place, was seized with horror and compassion.

“And even there,” continued Renzo, “he spoke like a saint; he said that perhaps the Lord was inclined to pardon this unfortunate man—(one can call him by no other name now)—that He awaited some favourable moment; but that he wished us to pray together for him —— Together! Have you understood?”

“Yes, yes; we will pray for him; each one in the place where the Lord shall have sent us; God will know how to unite our prayers.”

“But if I were to tell you his very words ——!”

“But, Renzo, he does not know ——”

“But do you not know that when a saint speaks, it is the Lord who makes him speak, and that he would not have spoken thus, if it had not been right? And then the soul of this poor unfortunate! I have sincerely prayed for him, and I will pray for him; I prayed for him from my heart, as though he had been my brother. But how do you think it will be with him in the next world, if our affair is not arranged in this world, if the evil which he has done is not repaired? If you would but listen to reason, then every thing would be as it was at first; what

has been, has been; he has done his penance here ———”

“No, Renzo, no. The Lord does not wish us to do evil, in order to excite His mercy. Let us leave this unfortunate to Him; our duty is to pray for him. If I had died that terrible night, would not God even then have been able to pardon him? And as I did not die, as I was liberated ———”

“And your mother, this poor Agnese, who always has wished me so well, who desired so much to see us man and wife, did she not also say that this was a foolish idea? She, who upon other occasions has made you listen to reason, for in certain things she thinks more justly than you ———”

“My mother! Do you wish that my mother should counsel me to break a vow? But, Renzo, you are no longer in your right mind.”

“But do you wish me to say it? You women cannot understand these things. Father Cristoforo told me that I should return to him, and tell him if I succeeded in finding you. I am going to him; we will hear him; what he says ———”

“Yes, yes; go to this holy man; tell him that I pray for him, and beg him to pray for me, for I stand in great, very great need of his prayers! But, for the love of heaven, for the love of your own soul, for the love of mine, do not come again to make me miserable ——— to tempt me. Father Cristoforo will know how to explain these things to you, and bring you back to your proper senses; he will set your heart at rest.”

“Set my heart at rest! Oh! drive all such thoughts out of your mind. You caused these words to be

written to me; and I know what they have made me suffer; and now you have the heart to tell them to me! And I, instead, tell you clearly and simply that I will never set my heart at rest! You wish to forget me, but I do not wish to forget you. And I promise you, do you see, that if you make me lose my judgment, I shall never more recover it. Do you wish to condemn me to madness the whole of my life; and I shall be mad if —— And then this unfortunate man! The Lord knows whether I have pardoned him from my heart; but you —— will you make me think the whole of my life, that if it had not been for him ——? Lucia! you have said that I should forget you; that I should forget you! What can I do? Upon whom do you suppose I have thought all this time?—And after so many things! after so many promises! And what have I done to you, then, since we were separated? Is it because I have suffered, that you treat me thus? Is it because I have endured misfortune? because the world has persecuted me? because I have passed so much time away from home, sad, and at a distance from you? because I have come to seek you the first moment that I was able?”

Lucia, joining her hands, and raising her tearful eyes towards heaven, exclaimed, as soon as her violent weeping permitted her to form words, “Oh, most holy Virgin, aid thou me! Thou dost know, how since that fearful night I have never passed a moment such as this! Thou didst aid me then; thou wilt aid me now!”

“Yes, Lucia, you do well to invoke the Madonna; but wherefore do you believe that *she* who is so good, who is the Mother of Mercy, can take pleasure in

making us suffer—me, at least—for one word which escaped you in a moment when you knew not what you said? Will you believe that she aided you then, in order to leave us afterwards in embarrassment?—If, then, this is only an excuse—if I am become hateful to you—tell me,—speak clearly.”

“For charity, Renzo, for charity, for the love of your poor dead, cease this conversation, cease; do not make me die. That would be no good moment. Go to Father Cristoforo, commend me to him, and return here no more, return here no more.”

“I go; but do you think that I shall return here no more! I shall return were it at the end of the world, I shall return,” and saying this he disappeared.

Lucia went to seat herself, or rather she let herself sink to the earth, beside the bed; and supporting her head against the bed, she continued to weep violently. The woman, her companion, who until now had remained breathless with both her eyes and ears open, now demanded the meaning of this apparition, of this strife, and this weeping. But perhaps the reader, on his side, may demand who this woman was; and we will satisfy him in a few words.

She was a rich shopkeeper, of perhaps about thirty years of age. Within a few days she had seen her husband and all her children die in their home; in a short time, the plague attacked her also, and she had been transported to the lazaretto and placed in this little hut, about the time when Lucia, after having unconsciously recovered from the fury of this disease, and after having equally unconsciously changed her companions many times, began to revive and return to herself; for she had remained insensible from the

commencement of her illness, when she was still in the mansion of Don Ferrante. This hut could only contain two persons; and between these two afflicted, abandoned, terrified women, alone in this vast multitude, an intimacy, a strong affection, had quickly arisen, an affection which a long acquaintance of many years could scarcely have given rise to. In a short time Lucia was in a condition to assist her companion, who was yet very ill. But now that she also was out of danger, they mutually encouraged and watched over each other by turns; they had promised each other to leave the lazaretto together; and had concerted other plans, so that they need not even afterwards be separated. The good woman, who having left her house, her warehouse, and her money in the care of one of her brothers who was a commissary of health, now finding herself the sole and sad mistress of much more than she required to live upon at her ease, wished to keep Lucia with her as a daughter or sister. Lucia had agreed to this, you can imagine with what gratitude both towards her and towards Providence; but only until she should receive tidings of Agnese, and learn her pleasure. But being of such a reserved disposition, she had never spoken one word regarding her betrothal, or her various extraordinary adventures. Now, however, in her violent agitation she had, at least, as much need of relieving her mind by the relation of her misfortunes, as her companion had a desire to listen to them. Therefore, grasping the right hand of her friend in both hers, she immediately commenced satisfying her demands, without other interruption than that occasioned by her sobs.

Renzo meanwhile hastened towards the quarter where was the good Friar. With a little attention, and not without having to retrace some of his steps, he at length succeeded in arriving there. He found the cabin, but the Friar he did not find; wandering about, and seeking for him in the neighbourhood, he at last discovered him in a tent, where bent to the earth and almost prostrate, he was comforting a dying wretch. Renzo paused and waited in silence. Shortly after he saw him close the eyes of the dead, then place himself on his knees, pray a moment, and arise. Renzo then moved and went towards him.

“ Oh ! ” said the Friar, seeing him approach; “ well ? ”

“ She is here; I have found her.”

“ In what condition ? ”

“ Recovered, or at least risen from her bed.”

“ Blessed be the Lord ! ”

“ But —— ” said Renzo, when he was near enough to speak in a low voice, “ there is another embarrassment.”

“ What is it ? ”

“ I would say that —— You already know how good this poor young girl is; but sometimes she is rather obstinate in her ideas. After so many promises, after all that you know, she now says she cannot marry me, because she says that in that night of terror, in the heat of her frenzy, she has, so to say, dedicated herself to the Madonna. These are unmeaning things, are they not? Excellent things, for those who have the knowledge and means of performing them; but for us common people, who do not well know how they should be done—are they not things which are of no value ? ”

"Tell me; is she far from here?"

"Oh, no; a few steps beyond the church."

"Wait for me a moment," said the Friar; "and then we will go there together."

"You mean to say that you will make her understand ——"

"I know nothing, my son; it is necessary that I hear her."

"I comprehend," said Renzo, and stood with his eyes fixed upon the earth, his arms crossed upon his breast, ruminating upon the uncertainty in which he still remained. The Friar again went in search of the Father Vittore, prayed him to supply his place, entered his hut, came forth again with his basket on his arm, and then turned towards Renzo, saying, "Let us go," and went on before, directing his steps towards that hut which they had both entered. This time the Friar entered alone, and re-appearing in a moment, said, "Nothing. Let us pray; let us pray;" then continued, "now, conduct me thyself."

Without more words they proceeded on their way.

The heavens were even yet more overcast, and announced an immediate tempest. Sudden flashes of lightning broke the increasing gloom, and illuminated with an instantaneous brightness the long roofs and arches of the porticoes, the cupola of the chapel, and the humble huts; and the repeated peals of thunder rolled from one quarter of the heavens to the other. The youth hastened on studying his route, filled with a violent impatience to arrive, yet slackening his pace so as to measure it with the strength of his companion. The old man exhausted by fatigue, oppressed by the disease and overpowered by the heat, pursued his

way with difficulty, raising every now and then his thin countenance towards heaven as though to breathe more freely.

Renzo, when he saw the hut, stopped, turned round, and said in a tremulous voice, "She is here."

They entered. "Here he is!" cried the woman who lay in bed. Lucia turned round, rose precipitately, and hastened towards the old man, exclaiming, "Oh, Father Cristoforo!"

"Well, Lucia; from how much anguish the Lord has delivered you. You ought to be very happy having always trusted in Him."

"Oh, yes. But you, Father? Alas! how you are changed. How are you? tell me, how are you?"

"As God wills, and as, through His grace, I wish myself to be," replied the Friar, with a serene countenance, And drawing her aside into a corner, he added, "Listen! I can only remain here a few moments. Are you disposed to confide in me, as in former times?"

"Oh, are not you always my father?"

"Well then, my daughter, what is this vow of which Renzo has told me?"

"It is a vow which I have made to the Madonna — oh, in great tribulation! — not to marry."

"Poor girl! But did you think at that time that you were already bound by a promise?"

"As the Lord and the Madonna were concerned — I did not think of it."

"The Lord, my daughter, accepts sacrifices, offerings, when what we offer is our own. It is the heart which He desires; it is the will; but you cannot offer Him the will of another to whom you have pledged yourself."

“ Have I done ill ? ”

“ No, my poor girl, do not think so; I believe even that the Holy Virgin will have accepted the intentions of your afflicted heart, and will have offered them to God for you. But tell me; you have never taken counsel with any one regarding this matter ? ”

“ I did not think it was evil, and that I was therefore obliged to confess it; and there was no need to relate the little good it might do. ”

“ Have you any other motive that should prevent you fulfilling the promise which you made to Renzo ? ”

“ As to that — for myself — what motive? I could not exactly say — ” replied Lucia, with hesitation, which indicated something very different from an uncertainty of thought; and her face, which was still pale from sickness, was suddenly suffused with the brightest rose.

“ Do you believe, ” replied the old man, lowering his eyes, “ that God has given to his church authority to remit and retain the obligations and debts which men may have contracted towards Him, in order to produce greater good ? ”

“ Yes, I believe he has. ”

“ Learn then that we, deputed to watch over the souls in this place, have for all those who have recourse to us the amplest powers of the church; and consequently, that I can, if you demand it, absolve you from any obligations which you may have contracted by this vow. ”

“ But is it not a sin to turn back—to repent of a promise made to the Madonna? I made it then from the bottom of my heart, ” said Lucia, violently agitated by the assault of such an unexpected hope, and by

the opposition of a terror, strengthened by all the thoughts which for so long had been the principal occupants of her soul.

“A sin, my daughter?” said the Father: “a sin to have recourse to the church, and to beseech her minister to exercise that authority which he has received from her, and which she received from God? I have seen how you were formed to be united; and certainly, if it ever has appeared to me that two beings ought to be united by God, you were these two: and now I do not see wherefore God has desired to separate you. And I bless him that he has given me (unworthy as I am) the power of speaking in his name, and of returning you your troth. If you ask me to declare you absolved from your vow, I shall not hesitate to do so; and I even desire that you should ask me.”

“Then ——! then! I ask it,” said Lucia, with a countenance now only troubled by a feeling of shame.

The Friar called by a sign the youth, who stood in the farthest corner, gazing (since he could do nothing else) fixedly at the two speakers, whose conversation was so interesting to him. When our youth had approached, the Friar said to Lucia, in a louder voice, “By the authority which I have received from the church, I declare you freed from your vow of virginity, annulling all that may have been inconsiderate in it, and liberating you from any obligation which you may have contracted.”

The reader can imagine how such words sounded in Renzo's ears. He returned the most enthusiastic thanks with his eyes to the one who had proffered them, and immediately, but in vain, sought to catch Lucia's eyes.

“Return with security and peace to the thoughts of a former time,” pursued the Capuchin: “Again, beseech from the Lord the favour to form of you a holy wife; and be confident that he will grant you this favour still more abundantly after so many woes. And thou,” said he, addressing Renzo, “recollect, my son, that if the church bestows upon thee this companion, it is not done to procure thee a temporal and mere worldly joy, which even should it be perfect and unmingled with grief, must, nevertheless, end in a great sorrow at the moment of your separation; but this is done to place you both in the path of joy which will have no end. Love each other as companions of travel, with the thought that you will have to separate, yet with the hope of being reunited for ever. Return thanks to heaven, who has conducted you to this state, not by means of noisy and transient gaiety, but through pain and misery, so as to dispose you to a perfect and tranquil joy. If God should grant you children, be careful in educating them for him — instil into their hearts love of him and of all mankind; and then you will guide them well in all the rest. Lucia! has he told you,” and here the Friar indicated Renzo, “has he told you whom he has seen here?”

“Oh, Father, he has told me!”

“You will pray for him! You will not grow weary. And you will also pray for me! My children! I wish you to preserve a remembrance of the poor Friar.” And saying this, he took from his basket a small box, of common wood, but turned and polished with a nicety peculiar to Capuchins of those times, and continued: “Within this is contained the remains of that bread — the first which I besought as an alms;

that bread of which you have heard speak! I leave it to you; preserve it, shew it to your children. They will come into a sorrowful world, in sorrowful times, and in the midst of proud and insolent men: tell them that they must always, always pardon! and every one, every one! and that they must also pray for the poor Friar!"

He presented the box to Lucia, who received it with respect, as though it had been a relic. Then, with a more tranquil voice, he continued: "Now tell me what support you have here in Milan; where do you think of finding an abode when you go forth from here? and who will conduct you to your mother, whom God preserve in health?"

"This good lady is a mother towards me for the present: we two shall leave this place together, and then we will think about everything."

"God bless her," said the Friar, approaching the bed.

"I also thank you," said the widow, "for the consolation which you have given these poor creatures, although I had counted upon always keeping this dear Lucia with me. I will care for her, I will accompany her to her village, and consign her into the hands of her mother, and," added she in an undertone, "I will give her her marriage outfit. I have a deal of property, and I have no longer left me any one of those who ought to enjoy it with me!"

"Thus" replied the Friar, "you can make a great sacrifice to the Lord, and to the good of your neighbour. I do not recommend this young girl to you, for I already see how much attached you are to her: we have only to praise the Lord, who shews himself a father even in his chastisements, and who in placing

you together has given you such a clear sign of his love towards both one and the other. Now," he resumed, turning towards Renzo, and taking him by the hand, "we two have no longer anything to do here; we have even remained too long. Let us go."

"Oh, Father!" said Lucia, "I shall see you again? I am recovered, I who do no good in this world; and you ——!"

"I had long," replied the old man in a serious and gentle voice, "requested a favour from the Lord, a very great favour—that of ending my days in the service of my fellow beings. If He now grant my power, all those who feel affection for me should assist me in returning thanks to Him. Come; give Renzo your commission for your mother."

"Relate to her what you have seen," said Lucia to her betrothed: "tell her that I have here found another mother, that I shall come with this mother to her as soon as I can, and that I hope to find her in health."

"If you have need of money," said Renzo, "I have here all the gold which you sent me, and ——"

"No, no," interrupted the widow; "I have only too much."

"Let us go," replied the Friar.

"Till we meet again, Lucia ——! and you also, kind Signora," said Renzo, unable to find words to express all that he felt in such a moment.

"Who knows whether the Lord will mercifully permit us to see each other again!" exclaimed Lucia.

"May He be always with you, and bless you," said Friar Cristoforo to the two companions, and then went forth with Renzo from the hut.

Night was not far off, and the weather seemed still

more threatening. The Capuchin again offered the youth shelter from this night in his tent. "I cannot bear thee company," added he; "but thou wilt be under cover."

Renzo, however, felt a strong desire to be journeying onward; and did not care to remain longer in such a place, when he could not avail himself of it in order to see Lucia, and would not have been able even to pass a little time with the good friar. As to the hour and weather, we might say, that had it been night or day, sunshine or rain, a gentle breeze or a north wind, it would have been all the same to him at that moment. He thanked the Friar, therefore, saying that he desired to go in search of Agnese as soon as possible.

When they were in the road, the friar pressed his hand and said: "If thou should'st find her, which God grant! salute this good Agnese also in my name; and tell her, and all who remain, to remember Fra Cristoforo, and to pray for him. May God watch over thee, and bless thee always!"

"Oh, dear Father ——! we shall see each other again—we shall see each other again!"

"Above, I hope;" and with these words he moved away from Renzo, who stood gazing after him until he lost sight of the good old man, and then hastily bent his steps towards the gate, casting to the right and left his last glances of compassion upon this place of woe. Here was an extraordinary movement—a running to and fro of Monatti, a carrying away of various things, an arranging of the tent awnings, a dragging along of the convalescent to the tents and the porticoes, so as to defend them from the terrible tempest.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

SCARCELY had Renzo crossed the threshold of the lazaretto, and turned towards the right in search of the small pathway by which he had that morning arrived before the walls, than large drops began to fall, one by one, upon the white and arid road, raising around them a minute dust; a moment after, and they fell thick and fast; and before he could reach the pathway, they came down in torrents. Renzo, however, instead of growing uneasy, only made merry in the rain, and rejoiced in the freshness of the air, in the murmur, in the stir among the grass and leaves, which were all trembling, drooping, reviving, glittering; he drew long and deep breaths; and in this change of outward nature, he experienced yet more intensely the change which had also taken place in his destiny.

But much more intense would this sentiment have been, could Renzo have divined what was known a few days later, that this water carried away the contagion. If the lazaretto was unable to restore to the outer world all the living it still contained within its walls, at least from this day forth it would receive no others into its fearful jaws. At the end of a week, doors and shops were seen re-opened, scarcely anything more was said about quarantine, and there only remained a few traces scattered here and there;

those traces which such a scourge always leaves after it for some time.

Our traveller, therefore, proceeded gaily along without having formed any design of where, of how, or of when he should stop, or whether even he should stop at all this night, alone eager to proceed onward, so as to arrive quickly at his village, there to find some one with whom he could speak, to whom he could relate his good fortune; but above all was he eager to set forth immediately on his way to Pasturo in search of Agnese. He travelled on with his mind wholly absorbed by the events of the day; but in the midst of all these scenes of misery, of horror, of danger, there floated one thought,—“I have found her, she is recovered; she is mine!” And then he would leap for joy, flinging the wet around him, like a spaniel just issued from the water; sometimes he would content himself with merely rubbing his hands, and then post on with more ardour than ever. Pursuing his road, he recalled the thoughts which he had felt that morning and the day previous, when coming; and this time he recalled precisely those which he had then sought to drive away—his doubts, the difficulty of the enterprise, the chance of finding her at all, of finding her living, of finding her among so many dead and dying! “And I have found her alive!” he concluded. He busied himself in thought with the most terrible occurrences of the day; he pictured himself with the knocker in his hand—“Will she, or will she not be there?”—and how little comfort there was in the reply! then to have scarcely time to deliberate upon it, before being fallen upon by those silly rascals! This lazaretto, too; that ocean

of misery! He desired to find her there; he had found her! He turned to the moment when the procession of convalescents had passed by; what a moment! what heartache at not finding her! and now he troubled himself no longer on that account. And the women's quarter! And then to hear that voice, that very voice, behind that hut, when he least expected it! But how? there was still the vow, and this knot was more difficult than ever to loosen! But now it was untied. And his hatred towards Don Rodrigo, this constant rage which embittered all his woes and poisoned all his consolation, had also vanished. In fact, so great was his happiness, that he would have been unable to imagine a more perfect contentment had it not been for his uncertainty regarding Agnese, his sad presentiment concerning Father Cristoforo, and for his still being in the midst of the plague.

He arrived at Sesto as night was closing in, and still it did not appear as though the rain would cease. However, feeling himself in a better walking mood than ever, spite of being wet through, he did not even think of stopping to rest. The only thing which incommoded him, was violent hunger, and hunger such as his would have easily caused him to digest stronger food than the Capuchin's weak broth. He looked around him to see whether also here there might not be a bakehouse; he saw one; he received two loaves with the tongs and the accompanying ceremonies. He placed one in his pocket and the other at his mouth, and was off again.

When he passed through Monza, it was already night; however, notwithstanding this, he succeeded

in finding the gate which led to the right road. The reader may imagine in what a state this road was, and how it became every moment worse. Sunk (as were then all roads; and this we must have already mentioned) between two banks, like the bed of a river, one might in such a moment have called it, if not a river, at least an aqueduct; and every now and then you came upon holes, out of which you could scarcely draw your foot, say nothing of your shoes. But Renzo extricated himself as well as he could, without giving any sign of impatience, without uttering an oath, without repenting. He thought that every step, cost what it might, carried him forward, that the rain would cease whenever it should please God; that, at proper time, day would break, and that the road, which he should traverse in the meantime, would then be traversed.

And to confess the truth he only thought about the road when he was forced to do so. Such thoughts were merely a distraction; the great labour of his mind was to recall the history of the three sad past years: so many embarrassments, so many adversities, so many moments in which he was near losing even his hope, and considering all lost; and then to oppose all this to the dreams of so different a future; the arrival of Lucia, their wedding, the pleasure of mutually relating their past misfortunes, and their whole life!

How then did he manage where there were two roads? Whether the little knowledge he had of the route, or whether the pale twilight assisted him in finding the right path, or whether he was directed by chance, we cannot tell; for even he himself, who was

often accustomed to relate his adventures at a greater length than we—and every thing leads us to believe that our Anonymous has heard him relate them more than once—even he himself, in this place, says, that he only recollects this night as though he had passed it in his bed dreaming. The fact, however, is, that in the morning he found himself on the shore of the Adda.

It had not yet ceased to rain; but the rain which had at first fallen in torrents, like a deluge, had now changed into a very fine, equal, penetrating rain; the clouds, high in the heavens, formed a constant yet transparent veil, and the light of the early dawn shewed Renzo the surrounding country. It was certainly his neighbourhood; and what he experienced at this spectacle could not be described. I can only say, that these mountains, this near Resegone, the territory of Lecco had become, as it were, his own property. He glanced at himself, and lo! he was in a strange plight; which, to say the truth, may easily be imagined, after all that has been related: every thing sticking to his back, from his head to his waist, all wet and dripping; from his waist to his toes, all mud and mire. If he could only have seen himself in a looking-glass, with his hat-crown all soft and fallen in, and his hair all straight and sticking to his face, his appearance would have made a still greater impression upon himself. As to fatigue, he might suffer from it, but he was not aware of it; and the freshness of the dawn, added to that of the night, and to the small bath he had enjoyed, only gave him greater alacrity, and a desire to travel on yet more quickly.

He was now at Pescate; he coasted along the Adda, casting a melancholy glance towards Pescarenico; he passed the bridge; and then by lanes and fields he soon arrived at the house of his friendly host. The friend, who was already risen, and was at his door contemplating the weather, raised his eyes towards this soaked and bemired figure, which was at the same time so lively and nimble; and in all his days he never had seen a man in a worse condition, yet more contented.

"O!" he said; "already here? and in this weather? How has all gone on?"

"She is there!" returned Renzo; "she is there; she is there!"

"In health?"

"Recovered, which is better. I ought to thank God and the Madonna as long as I live. But I have seen great things, terrible things; I will relate all to thee by and by."

"But in what a fine trim thou art."

"I am very handsome, eh?"

"To speak the truth, thou couldst very well wash the lower part of thy body with the upper. But wait, wait; I will make thee a good fire."

"I will not say no. Dost thou know where the rain overtook me? Exactly at the gate of the lazaretto; but that was nothing. The weather had his business, and I had mine."

The friend went out, and returned with two armfuls of fuel; one portion he placed on the floor, the other on the hearth, and with an ember which had remained from the night before, he quickly raised a beautiful flame. Renzo, meanwhile, had taken off

his hat, and after having shaken it several times, had flung it on the ground; he had also, but not so easily, torn off his doublet. He then drew from the pocket of his breeches his large knife, the sheath of which was all wet and soft; he placed it on a bench, saying, "My knife also is in a fine condition; but it is with water, it is with water. The Lord be thanked — It was near, near committing a deed — I will tell thee all by-and-by." And he rubbed his hands. "Now do me another favour," he added; "go and fetch me that bundle that I left up-stairs, for before these clothes dry upon my back —"

Returning with the bundle, the friend said, "I think thou must have a good appetite; I know that thou wilt not have stood in need of drink upon the road, but food —"

"I managed to buy two loaves late last evening, but in truth they have not touched my teeth."

"Leave all to me," returned the friend, who placing water in a pot, which he then suspended to a chain, added, "I will go and milk; when I return with the milk the water will be ready, and we will make a good *polenta*. In the meantime make thyself comfortable."

Renzo being left alone, removed, but not without difficulty, his remaining garments, for they seemed to stick to his body; he then dried and reclothed himself from head to foot. The friend returned and went to his pot. Renzo meanwhile seated himself.

"Now I feel that I am fatigued," he said; "but it was a fine walk! However that is nothing, I have things to relate to thee during all the day. What a

terrible state Milan is in! The things which one is forced to see! The things which one is obliged to touch! Things which give one a disgust to oneself! I dare say nothing less than this fine washing was necessary to cleanse me! And then what those gentlemen in Milan wanted to do to me! Thou shalt hear. But if thou couldst only see the lazaretto! There is misery without end! Enough; I will relate all to thee — And she is there, and she will come here and will be my wife; thou shalt be my witness, and pest or no pest, we will be merry at least for a few hours.”

In short, Renzo was faithful to his promise of relating his adventures to him all the day, more especially as the rain not ceasing, he passed all this day in the house, sometimes sitting beside his friend, sometimes occupied with his friend in preparing casks and other things for the vintage; for, as he was himself accustomed to say, he was one of those who fatigue themselves far more by doing nothing than by working. However, he could not keep himself from making a little excursion to Agnese's cottage, to look again at a certain window, and give another rub of his hands. He returned without having been seen by any one, and then immediately went to bed. He arose before it was day; and perceiving that the rain had at least ceased, though as yet the weather did not appear entirely fine, he set forth on his way to Pasturo.

It was still early when he arrived there, for he was not less eager than the reader to end his journey.

He inquired after Agnese, learnt that she was well,

and was directed to a small isolated house in which she dwelt. He hastened thither, called to her from the street; at his voice she ran to the window, and whilst she stood with her mouth open to send forth I know not what cry, Renzo forestalled her, exclaiming, " Lucia is recovered; I have seen her the day before yesterday; she salutes you; she will come here immediately. And then I have many, many things to tell you."

What between surprise at his apparition, joy at this news, and her desire to know more, Agnese began now to exclaim, now to question without finishing a sentence; then forgetting the precautions she had been accustomed to observe for some time, she said, " I will come and open the door for you."

" Wait," cried Renzo, " the plague? you have not had it I believe."

" No, I have not, and you?"

" I have had it, but still you ought to be prudent. I have just come from Milan, and you will hear that I have been in the midst of the contagion, up to the very eyes. It is true that I have changed all my clothes from head to foot, but it is a sort of thing which sticks to one always, like a crime. And since the Lord has preserved you until now, I should like you to take care of yourself till this cursed influence has ceased; for you are our mother, and I want us to live a long time happily together as compensation for the great suffering we have endured."

" But," commenced Agnese.

" Ah!" interrupted Renzo: " there is now no *but* which prevents me. I know what you would say;

but you shall hear, you shall hear, for there is no longer any *but*! Let us go into some open space where we can speak at our ease, and without danger; and you shall hear."

Agnese indicated to him an orchard, which was behind the house; and added; "Enter, and you will see two benches there, one opposite the other, benches which seem as though they had been placed on purpose for us. I will come directly."

Renzo went and seated himself upon one; a moment after, Agnese found herself upon the other: and I am certain that could the reader have been there as a third person, informed as he is of all the preceding events, could he have witnessed this animated conversation; could he have heard with his own ears their various relations, their questions, their explanations, their condolences, their congratulations, all about Don Rodrigo and poor Father Cristoforo, and all the rest, and their descriptions of the future, clear and positive, as though they were descriptions of the past; I am certain, I say, that he would have taken great interest in the scene, and would have been the last to go away. But to see all this conversation merely upon paper, in silent written words, without finding a single new fact, is a thing about which he would not care a deal, but would like better to imagine it for himself. The conclusion was, that they should all keep house together in that Bergamascan village in which Renzo had already settled; as to the time, nothing could now be decided, because that depended upon the plague, and upon other circumstances: as soon as the danger should be at an end, Agnese was to return home, and there await Lucia, or Lucia should go and await her there:

meantime, Renzo should often take a trip over to Pasturo, to see his mother, and keep her informed of all that might happen.

Before taking his departure, he offered her also money, saying, "I have them all here you see, these pieces of money: I also had made a vow, which was not to touch them until all should be brought to light. Now if you have need of any money, only bring a bowl of vinegar and water, and I will throw these fifty beautiful, glittering scudi into it."

"No, no," said Agnese: "I have still more than I want for myself: preserve yours, for they will be useful to commence housekeeping with."

Renzo departed with the new consolation of having found so dear a person safe and sound. He remained the rest of that day and the following night in his friend's house. The next day he was again on foot; but journeying in another direction, that is, towards his adopted country.

He found Bartolo also in good health, and in less fear of losing this blessing; for within these few days things, even there, had rapidly taken a better course. Those who fell sick, were now few in number; the disease was no longer what it had been; the patients became no longer of that deadly livid hue, neither were they attacked with such violent symptoms; it was now a fever, for the most part intermittent, sometimes accompanied with small discoloured spots, which healed like ordinary biles. The very aspect of the country already appeared changed; the few inhabitants who yet remained began to go out, to relate their sufferings to each other, and to exchange mutual congratulations and condolences. People already spoke

of recommencing their trades; masters thought of seeking after workmen, especially for such trades in which the number of workmen had been small even before the contagion, as was peculiarly the case with the silk trade.

Renzo, without making any difficulty, promised his cousin to resume his labour as soon as he should return with his companions to settle in the country. Meanwhile he occupied himself in making more necessary preparations; he provided himself with a larger house, a thing which was now become much easier and much less expensive, and furnished it with goods and chattels; this time having recourse to his treasure, but without making a great hole in it, for now every thing was cheap, there being more property than people to buy it.

After I know not how many days he returned to his native village, which he found still more remarkably changed for the better. He then immediately hastened to Pasturo; he found Agnese completely reassured, and disposed to return to her house whenever this might be. He conducted her thither. We will pass over in silence their sentiments and their words, when they together again beheld these well-known places.

Agnese found every thing as she had left it; therefore she could not do less than say that this time, the objects being a poor widow and a poor young girl, angels had watched over them. "And the other time," added she, "one might have thought that the Lord had turned his regards elsewhere, and no longer thought about us, since he permitted our small possession to be carried away; but, behold! he had done

the contrary, for he sent me money out of another quarter, with which I was able to replace every thing. I say every thing, but that is not correct; for Lucia's outfit, which they had carried off with the other things, all new and excellent, was still wanting; but now, that also comes out of another direction. Who could have said to me, when I was at such pains to prepare the other, 'ah, Agnese! thou dost imagine thou art working for Lucia; alas, poor woman! thou art working for those whom thou dost not know. Heaven only knows what sort of people will wear this linen and these garments! Those which Lucia will wear, and the real outfit which she will use, will be provided by a good soul, whose very existence is unknown to thee!'"

Agnese's first thought was how to prepare in her poor little cottage the most decent lodging she could for this good soul. She next went for silk to wind, and winding, she beguiled away the time.

Renzo, on his side, did not pass in idleness these days which in themselves were so long. Fortunately he possessed two trades, and he now applied himself to that of the farmer. Sometimes he assisted his host, for whom it was a great piece of good fortune to find often at his command a workman of Renzo's ability; at other times, he cultivated and put in order the small garden belonging to Agnese, which, during her absence, had remained wholly untilled. As for his own little farm, he never once troubled himself about it, saying that it was a peruke far too much entangled for him to meddle with, and that it would require more than one pair of arms to set it to rights. Neither did he set foot, either in it or the house,

knowing that the sight of this desolation would pain him; and having already determined to dispose of every thing for whatever price he could get, and then employ, in his new country, what he might thus gain.

If the living appeared to each other like people risen from the dead, Renzo appeared to the remaining inhabitants of his village doubly so; every one offered him the most hearty receptions and congratulations, every one desired to hear him relate his history. You will perhaps ask, "What has become of his banishment?"

All went on very well in that quarter: he himself thought scarcely any thing more about it, supposing that those who should execute the sentence thought no more about it themselves; and in this he did not deceive himself. This carelessness was not alone occasioned by the plague, which had caused so many things to be forgotten; but in those times, as the reader may have already seen in various other passages of this history, it was no uncommon occurrence for decrees, both general and special, issued against individuals, to remain often without effect, except when they had been executed immediately, or unless some private powerful animosity kept them alive, and made them felt: they were like musket balls, which, unless they strike, remain on the earth, where they cause no one any annoyance. This was a necessary consequence of the facility with which these decrees were issued.

The activity of man is limited; and if more than necessary activity is employed in laying down commands, not enough will be employed in executing

them. What goes for the sleeves cannot go into the gussets.

Whoever is anxious to learn how Renzo and Don Abbondio went on during this interval, may be informed that they both kept away from each other. Don Abbondio, through fear of hearing something about matrimony; at the very idea of which he saw before his eyes, on one hand, Don Rodrigo with his bravoës, on the other, the Cardinal with his arguments. Renzo, because he had determined not to speak of the marriage until the moment of its celebration, not wishing to run the risk of vexing him such a long time beforehand, and fearing to see him start some fresh difficulty, or embarrass affairs by useless gossip. His gossips were with Agnese. "Do you think that she will come soon?" one would ask. "I hope so," the other would reply: and very often the one who gave the reply would a short time after ask the same question. Thus, with similar impostures did they endeavour to beguile the time, which appeared to them to grow ever longer as it gradually passed on.

For the reader's pleasure we will hasten over this time, in one moment, saying briefly that a few days after Renzo's visit to the lazaretto, Lucia left its gates with the good widow. A general quarantine having been ordered, they underwent it together, shut up in the widow's house. A portion of this time was spent in preparing Lucia's marriage outfit, at which she herself, after a little hesitation, worked; and when this quarantine was ended, the widow leaving her shop and house in the care of her brother the commissary, made preparations for her journey. We

could even relate without pausing, how they set out, how they arrived, and what then followed; but with all the desire we have to second the reader's haste, there are three things appertaining to this interval of time which we cannot pass over in silence; and regarding the relation of two of these circumstances, at least, we believe that the reader himself will confess that we have not done wrong.

Here is the first. When Lucia narrated her adventures to the widow, more in detail than she had been able to do in the agitation of their first confidence, and mentioned more expressly the Signora who had afforded her an asylum in the convent at Monza, she came to hear things regarding this unhappy lady which gave her the key to many mysteries, and filled her soul with a sorrowful and painful astonishment. She learned from the widow, that the unfortunate girl, being suspected of the most atrocious crimes, had been transported by order of the Cardinal, to a convent in Milan; that there, after having for some time delivered herself up to despair and rage, she had at length ended by repenting and accusing herself; and that her present life was such a voluntary torture that no one could imagine a more fearful one, unless they were at once to have deprived her of it. Any one who should desire to learn further particulars regarding this sad history, will find them in the book and at the passage which we have already quoted when speaking of this personage.*

The second circumstance is, that Lucia, inquiring after Father Cristoforo from all the Capuchins she

* Ripamonti Hist. Pal. Dec. v. lib. vi. cap. iii.

could see at the lazaretto, learned with more grief than astonishment that he had died of the plague.

And finally, before taking her departure she desired also to learn something concerning her former patrons, and would have liked to pay her respects, were they still alive. The widow accompanied her to the mansion, where they learned that they both had departed this life some time before. As to Donna Prassede, when one says that she was dead, all is said; but, as Don Ferrante was a learned man, our Anonymous has considered him deserving of more attention; and we at our own risk are going to transcribe pretty nearly what he has left written on the subject.

He says, then, that from the very first mention of the plague, Don Ferrante was one of the most resolute in denying its existence, and that he maintained his opinion unto the very last; not, certainly, with the same cries as the people, but by arguments which no one could blame for their want of concatenation.

“*In rerum natura*,” he said, “there are only two kinds of things, substances and accidents; and if I prove that the contagion is neither one nor the other, I shall have proved that it does not exist, that it is a chimera; and I can prove it. And here are my arguments. Substances are either spiritual or material. That the contagion is a spiritual substance, is a proposition which no one would maintain, therefore it is useless speaking about it. Material substances are either simple or compound. Now the contagion is not a simple substance; and this may be demonstrated in a few words. It is not an ethereal substance, since were it such, instead of passing from one body to an-

other, it would fly immediately to its sphere. It is not a watery substance, because it would be wet, and would be dried up by the winds. Neither is it igneous, because it would burn. Neither is it terrestrial, because then it would be visible. Nor is it a compound substance either, since as such it ought to be sensible either to the eye or to the touch; and who has seen, who has touched the contagion? It now remains for us to see whether it may be an accident. This is still more difficult to prove. These doctors say that the contagion is communicated from one body to another; this is their Achilles, their pretext for giving so many useless orders. Now supposing it an accident, it would be a transferable accident; and these are two words at variance one with the other. There is not, in all philosophy, a thing more clear, more evident than this, that an accident cannot pass from one subject to another; for if to avoid this Scylla, people are reduced to call it an accident produced, they fall into Charybdis; because if it is produced, it cannot be communicated, or propagate itself as they declare. These principles allowed, what is the use of coming to talk to us about blotches or carbuncles —— ?”

“They are all nonsense,” some one happened once to let fall.

“No, no,” resumed Don Ferrante; “I do not say so; science is science; it is only necessary to know how to apply it. Tumours, violet blotches, black carbuncles, are all respectable words, which have their good and proper signification; but I maintain that they have nothing to do with the question. Who denies that there may be such things, and even that

there are? The thing is to learn from whence they come."

Here commenced Don Ferrante's annoyances. As long as he only jeered at the idea of contagion, he found everywhere willing and attentive ears; for it is impossible to say how great is the authority of a learned man, when he desires to demonstrate to others things of which they are already well persuaded. But when he desired to demonstrate that the error of these doctors did not consist in affirming that there was a terrible and general evil, but in assigning its cause; then—we speak of the early times, in which no one would listen to discourses regarding the plague,—then, instead of attentive ears, he found rebellious intractable tongues; his continuous orations were at an end; and he could only expound his doctrines by bits and snatches.

"The true cause is only too clearly to be proved," he said, "and even those who maintain other foolish opinions, are obliged to acknowledge it. Let them deny, if they can, this fatal conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter. And whenever did we hear of influences propagating themselves ——? And these signors wish to deny the influence. They will deny next that there are planets! Or do they mean to say that stars are fixed on high for no purpose, just like so many pins stuck into a pincushion? But what I cannot understand in these doctors is, that they confess we find ourselves under such a malignant influence, and yet they say to us, 'do not touch this, do not touch that, and then you will be safe!' As though avoiding the material contact of terrestrial bodies, could prevent the virtual effects of celestial

bodies! And then all this burning of rags! Poor people! can they burn Jupiter? can they burn Saturn?"

Hic fretus, that is to say, upon these grounds he took no precaution against the plague: he was attacked by it—went to bed—to die like one of Matasaseo's heroes, still complaining of the stars.

And his famous library? It is even yet, perhaps, mouldering upon the walls.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ONE evening Agnese heard a carriage pause before the door. "It is certainly Lucia!" cried Agnese; and in truth it was Lucia, accompanied by the good widow. The reader can imagine their meeting.

The following morning Renzo arrived very early, entirely ignorant of what had happened, and came merely to console himself a little with Agnese during Lucia's long delay. His behaviour and his words when he really found that she was arrived, we will also leave to the reader's imagination. Lucia's demonstrations of joy were such as require but little description. "I salute you, how are you?" said she, with her eyes cast down, and without betraying much emotion. But do not imagine that Renzo considered this too cold a reception, or became alarmed. He rightly understood her meaning; and unlike well-educated people, who know how to believe half the compliments which are paid them, Renzo comprehended very well that these words did not express all that passed in Lucia's heart. Besides, it was very easy to perceive that Lucia had two ways of pronouncing these words; one way for Renzo, and the other for the rest of her acquaintance.

"I am very well when I see you," replied the young man, in an old cut-and-dried phrase, which, however, in this instance happened to be original.

“Our poor Father Cristoforo!” said Lucia, “pray for his soul; for one may be nearly sure that he is now praying for us above.”

“I only expected as much,” said Renzo; and this was not the only sorrowful chord they touched upon in their discourse. But let the subject of their discourse be whatsoever it might, it always in the end became delightful and gay. Time with them resembled fiery horses, which prance about, raising first one foot and then the other, replacing them upon the same spot, and making a thousand gambols without advancing one step, when all at once they will start forth in their course, and away like the wind! At first, moments had appeared hours; now hours appeared moments.

The widow, far from spoiling the company, added greatly to the general enjoyment; and certainly, Renzo when he first saw her lying in that miserable bed, could never have imagined her of so social and jovial a disposition. But, the lazaretto and the country, death and a wedding, are not one and the same thing; she had already formed a friendship with Agnese. It was a real pleasure to see her with Lucia, at once tender and gay, and then how she gently bantered her, yet scarcely sufficient to oblige Lucia to shew all the joy that lay concealed in her heart.

Renzo at length said that he would go to Don Abbondio and concert arrangements for the marriage. He went, and with a certain air, half-jocular, half-respectful, “Signor Curato,” he said, “has that bad headache left you, on account of which you told me you could not marry us? Now it is time, the bride is here, and I am come to learn when it will be

agreeable to you; but this time I pray you to make haste."

Don Abbondio did not say no; but he began to assign certain excuses, to insinuate a hundred things; why place himself in the market-place and have his name cried aloud, when this arrest was hanging over him? why could not the marriage be celebrated equally well elsewhere? and this and the other thing.

"I understand," said Renzo, "you have still a little of this headache remaining; but listen, listen." And he began to describe the state in which he had seen poor Don Rodrigo, and how he must certainly have already departed this life. "Let us hope," concluded Renzo, "that the Lord will have shewn him mercy."

"That has nothing to do with the subject," said Don Abbondio; "did I refuse? I did not say no: I speak—I speak because I have good reasons. For the rest, you see that as long as a man breathes — Look at me, I am a cracked vessel; I was nearer dead than alive, and yet I am still here; and, if fresh misfortunes do not overpower me, I may still hope to remain here a little longer. I imagine then certain temperaments; but as I said before, that has nothing to do with the subject."

After some other remarks, neither more nor less conclusive, Renzo took his leave with a very beautiful bow, returned to his friends, made his relation, and ended by saying, "I have come back, fearing I might lose my patience, and not pay him proper respect. Several times he appeared precisely the Don Abbondio of the former time; he had his same excuses, his same reasons; I am sure had the conversation lasted much

longer, he would have brought his Latin again into the field. I see that this will be a long business; it would be better to do as he advises, go and be married where we mean to live."

"Do you know what we will do?" said the widow. "I should like us women to go and make another trial, and see whether we shall succeed any better. Besides, I have a great desire to know this man, if he is such as you describe. I should like us to go after dinner, so as not to fall upon him immediately. Now, sir bridegroom, take us a little walk whilst Agnese is busied; I will act mother to Lucia; and really I have a great desire to see something more of these mountains, and of this lake of which I have heard so much, and the little I have already seen appears to me so beautiful."

Renzo conducted them first to the house of his host, where was another scene of happiness; and they made the friend promise that he would come, not only this day, but every day if he could, and dine with them.

After having walked and dined, Renzo suddenly disappeared, without saying where he was going to. The women remained a short time consulting upon the best manner to surprise Don Abbondio; and, at length, they hastened to the assault.

"Here they are!" said the poor Curate to himself, when he saw them appear; but he put on a good face; offered many congratulations to Lucia, many salutations to Agnese, and many compliments to the stranger. He begged them to be seated, and then immediately began speaking about the plague. He wished to learn from Lucia how she had passed

through that painful time; the lazaretto gave him an opportunity of drawing into conversation the one who had been her companion there; then, as was but natural, Don Abbondio also spoke of his own misfortune; and then he offered unbounded congratulations to Agnese upon having had the happiness to escape. The discourse was growing long; from the very commencement the two women had been upon the watch for an opportunity of introducing the important subject; at length one of them broke the ice. But what could you expect? Don Abbondio was deaf to such subjects. He did not exactly say *no*; but there he was again, with his doubts and his difficulties, hopping like a bird from branch to branch. "It would be necessary," said he, "to remove this sentence of arrest. You, Signora, who are from Milan, must know more or less the course of these things; you must have some powerful protector, some patron of influence; by these means all wounds may be healed. If, after all, they wish to take the shortest road, without embarking themselves in any more misfortunes; since these young people, and our Agnese, here, have the intention of leaving their country (and, I can only say, one's country is where one is well off), it appears to me that all can be done in the new country, where there is no sentence of arrest to prevent them. I long to see this match concluded; but I should like it concluded well and tranquilly. I speak the truth; here with this unhappy arrest hanging over him, which every one knows, to pronounce from the altar this name of Lorenzo Tramaglino, is a thing which I could not do with an easy conscience; I should be afraid of doing him an ill

service. You see yourself, my good lady, you see, my good friends."

Here Agnese and the widow began combating his arguments, and Don Abbondio bringing them again into the field, but under another form. It was all the old scene over again; when Renzo suddenly entered with a decided step, and the air of one who brings news, saying, "The Lord Marquis of —— has arrived."

"What is the meaning of that? where has he arrived?" demanded Don Abbondio, rising.

"He has arrived at his palace, formerly Don Rodrigo's; he is the heir by feoffment, as they say; so you see there is no longer any doubt about the matter. For myself I should be satisfied if I could only know that this poor man died well. Until now I have said *Paternosters*, now I will say for him *De profundis*. And this Lord Marquis is a most excellent man."

"Certainly," said Don Abbondio; "I have more than once heard him called a worthy gentleman, a man of the old sort. But is it really true?"

"You believe the Sacristan?"

"Why?"

"Because he has seen him with his own eyes. I was in the neighbourhood; for, to confess the truth, I went thither because I thought something might be known there about Don Rodrigo. More than one person told me the same thing. And then I met Ambrogio, who was coming down himself, and he had seen him, as he says, acting the master. Will you listen to Ambrogio? I have made him wait outside on purpose."

"Let us hear," said Don Abbondio. Renzo went and called the Sacristan, who entirely confirmed every thing, added fresh details, dissipated all doubts, and then departed.

"Ah! then he is really dead! he is really gone!" exclaimed Don Abbondio. "You see my children, whether Providence does not watch over all! What a great event! what a repose for this poor country! for no one could live in peace with him. This plague has been a great scourge; but it has also been *a good broom*; it has swept away certain individuals, my children, from whom we could never have delivered ourselves; young, vigorous, strong; one might almost have said, that he who was destined to perform their obsequies was still in the seminary, learning his Latin lessons. In the twinkling of an eye they have disappeared a hundred at a time. We shall no longer see him wandering about with his Hectors behind him, with his ostentation, with his haughty airs, with his upright body gazing at the multitude as though they were only on the earth for his pleasure. Now, he is no longer here—yet we are. He will never again send such embassies to honest men. He has led us a miserable life of it, and now we dare open our mouths."

"I have pardoned him with all my heart," said Renzo.

"And thou hast done thy duty," replied Don Abbondio; "but thou canst also return thanks to heaven for having liberated us. To return, however, to yourselves; do what you consider best. If you desire me to marry you, here I am; if you like to do otherwise, do as you think fit. As to the arrest, I

see myself, that there being no longer any one who watches you or desires to do you evil, it is not a thing about which you need trouble yourselves much; especially since this act of grace was published on the birth of the most serene infant. And then the plague! the plague! This plague has effaced many things. Therefore if you like (to-day is Thursday) on Sunday I will publish your banns; for what happened on the former occasion now no longer counts for anything after such a length of time; and then I shall have the happiness of marrying you."

"You know that we are come precisely for that," said Renzo.

"Very good; I will serve you; and I will immediately inform his Eminence."

"Who is his Eminence?" asked Agnese.

"This Eminence," replied Don Abbondio, "is our Cardinal Archbishop, whom God preserve."

"Oh! as to that, excuse me; for although I am a poor ignorant woman, I can assure you that he is not called so; for when we went the second time to speak to him, just as we might speak with you, one of the priests drew me aside, and instructed me how I was to address him, and told me that it was proper to say *Your Most Illustrious Lordship*, and *My Lord*."

"And now, if he were to instruct you, he would tell you to address him as his Eminence: do you understand? For the Pope, whom God also preserve! since the month of June has prescribed this title for the Cardinals. And do you know what induced him to form this resolve? It was owing to *Most Illustrious*, which was the title of the Cardinals, and of certain other princes, having, do you see, become so common;

and you know how willingly people assume it. And what could the Pope do? Deprive all of it? That would only have occasioned remonstrances, hatred, trouble, misfortune, and after all, things would only have gone on as before. Therefore he discovered an excellent expedient. By little and little, the title of Eminence was given to bishops, then the abbots desired it, then the rectors, for such is the ambition of man; all desire to mount, always to mount! next the canons——”

“And then the curates,” remarked the widow.

“No, no,” replied Don Abbondio, “the curates draw the cart: don’t be alarmed lest the curates should be permitted to acquire bad habits; they will be their *Reverence* until the end of the world. I should be less surprised if the nobles, who are accustomed to hear themselves addressed as Most Illustrious and to be treated as Cardinals, should some day desire the Eminence for themselves. And if they should desire it, do you see, there will be plenty of people who will give it them. And then the Pope who shall be then, will find something else for the Cardinals. But let us return to our affairs; on Sunday I will publish your banns in church; and meanwhile, do you know how I have thought of serving you? We will ask for a dispensation from the two other announcements. They must have a busy life of it there down in the court of justice, granting dispensations, if things go on everywhere as they do here. For Sunday, I have already—one—two—three; without counting you, and others may still arrive. No one wishes to live alone. Perpetua committed a great folly dying just then; for now is the moment, when

even she might have found a customer. And at Milan, Signora, I imagine it must be the same."

"Certainly: only imagine that in my parish last Sunday the banns for fifty couples were published!"

"Yes, indeed; the world will not come at an end. And, my good lady, have no hornets begun already to hum about you?"

"No, no; I don't think about such things, neither do I wish to."

"Yes, yes; for you wish to be peculiar. Even Agnese, you see, even Agnese ——"

"Ah, you wish to joke," returned she.

"Certainly, I wish to joke; and it seems to me that it is at length time. We have passed terrible days, have we not, my young friends? terrible days; and now we will hope that the few which yet remain for us on this earth may be happier. But, fortunate are you, who still have time left you to talk of past woes! I instead, am old, and —— scoundrels may die; one may recover from the plague; but there is no remedy for old age; and as they say; *senectus ipsa est morbus*."

"Now," said Renzo, "you may talk as much Latin as you like; it no longer matters to me."

"Thou art still quarreling with my Latin; well, well, I will manage that. When thou shalt come before me with this young girl on purpose to hear certain Latin words, I will say,—'thou dost not like Latin; depart in peace.' Will that please thee?"

"Ah, I know what I say!" replied Renzo: "it is not that kind of Latin that frightens me; that is a sincere, sacred Latin, such as the Latin of the mass. I speak of this rascally Latin, out of the church, which falls upon one treacherously in the midst of a discourse.

For example, now that we are here, now that all is at an end, translate for me into the vulgar tongue, the Latin which you kept repeating, here in this very corner, when you gave me to understand that you could not marry us, and that many others were wanted!"

"Hush! you malicious fellow, hush! Don't begin reviving such subjects; for if we had to settle accounts, I don't know which of us would be in debt most to the other. I have pardoned every thing: we will speak no more about these affairs; but you played me plenty of tricks! Such conduct from thee does not astonish me, for thou art a good-for-nothing fellow; but I speak of this still-water, this little saint, this little Madonna, whom to have distrusted would have appeared a sin. But I know who instructed her, I know, I know." Saying this, he pointed to Agnes with his finger, which he had at first directed towards Lucia; and it would be impossible to describe with what a kind and pleasant air he made these reproaches. This news had inspired him with a joy, a flow of words which had for long been unusual to him; and we should be still far from the end, did we wish to report the remainder of this discourse, which he lengthened out, more than once detaining the company, who desired to depart, and pausing at the door to speak of trifles.

The following day he received a visit, not less agreeable than it was unexpected. This was from the Marquis, of whom we have spoken; a man in middle life, whose appearance answered to the report of fame—open, courteous, placid, humble, dignified, and yet with a certain air of resigned melancholy.

“I come,” said he, “to bring you salutations from the Cardinal Archbishop.”

“O what condescension in both of you!”

“In taking leave of this incomparable man, who honours me with his friendship, he spoke to me of two young people of this parish, who were betrothed, and who have suffered much misery, owing to poor Don Rodrigo. My lord desired to have intelligence regarding them. Are they alive? and are their affairs settled?”

“Every thing is settled. I had even proposed myself to write word to his Eminence: but now that I have the honour ——”

“Are they here?”

“Yes, here; and as soon as possible they will be man and wife.”

“And I pray you to be so good as to tell me whether I can be of service to them, and also to inform me of which will be the most suitable manner. Through this calamity I have lost my two only sons and their mother, and have become heir to three considerable fortunes. Even before these sad events, I enjoyed a superfluity of riches: therefore you see that affording me an occasion to employ my wealth, and especially an occasion such as the present, is really doing me a service.”

“Heaven bless you! why are not all ——? but enough. I also thank you from my heart for these poor children; and since your illustrious lordship allows me to be so bold, I have, my lord, an expedient to suggest, which will not perhaps displease your lordship. Know then, that these good people are resolved to fix their abode elsewhere, and to sell the little

property which they have here: a vineyard belonging to the young man, of about nine or ten perches, but wholly untilled; you can count upon the land, but nothing more; besides this, there is a small house belonging to him, and another to his bride; two mere rat-nests! A lord such as you cannot know how hard it goes with the poor when they wish to dispose of their possessions. The news always reaches the ears of some scoundrel, who has perhaps been gazing for some time with longing eyes at these few yards of land, and who when he hears that the other has a desire to sell, draws back and often succeeds in buying it for a morsel of bread, especially in circumstances like the present. The Lord Marquis will already have perceived the aim of my discourse. The greatest charity which your most illustrious lordship could do for these people is to extricate them from this embarrassment, by buying their small property. I, to confess the truth, give an interested piece of advice, since you see by this means I should receive into my parish your lordship as a parishioner; but your lordship will decide as appears best to you. I have spoken to obey your lordship."

The Marquis most warmly praised this suggestion, thanked Don Abbondio, and prayed him to fix the price, and to fix upon a very high one. He then increased the good man's astonishment, by proposing that they should immediately proceed together to Lucia's house, where most probably the lover would be also.

On the road, Don Abbondio, filled with joy, as you may well imagine, thought of and proposed another kind deed. "Since your illustrious lordship

is so much inclined to do good to these people, there is still another service you might render them. There is a writ of arrest, a sort of banishment hanging over the young man, for some prank which he played at Milan two years ago, on the day of the great commotion, in the midst of which he had, without any evil intent, out of pure ignorance, found himself, just like a rat in a trap: it was nothing serious, you see; mere childish follies; he is incapable of doing any real evil; and this I can say, who have baptised him, and seen him grow up. And then, if your lordship would like to amuse yourself by hearing these poor people relate their adventures after their own manner, you could get them to tell their history, and then you will hear. Now as the offence is an old affair, no one will trouble himself about it; and besides, as I said before, the young man thinks of leaving the country; but in time, if he should return here, who can tell? it would certainly be best to find himself entirely free. The Lord Marquis is considered in Milan as a just man, and a powerful knight, and a great gentleman as he is ——. No, no! allow me to speak, for truth must be spoken. A recommendation—a word from one like you, is more than necessary to obtain a complete discharge.”

“There are no strong charges brought against this young man?”

“No, no; don’t imagine so. For the first moment people were very hot against him; but now I believe it is nothing more than a simple formality.”

“Such being the case, the thing will be very easy; and I willingly undertake it.”

“And yet your lordship does not like one to call

you a great man. I say it, and I will say it; in spite of you I will say it. And even were I myself to keep silence, that would serve nothing, for already every one says the same thing; and *vox populi, vox Dei*."

They found, in truth, the three women and Renzo. I leave you to imagine the astonishment of these four individuals! Nay, I even believe that these bare rough walls, the paper windows, the wooden benches, and the various cooking utensils, wondered at receiving among them such an extraordinary visitor. The Marquis began the conversation by speaking of the Cardinal and of other things with open cordiality, yet, at the same time, with measured delicacy. He then went on to make the proposition about which he was come. Don Abbondio, besought by him to name the price, after hesitating some time, after some ceremony and excuses; that it was not his affair, that he could only give a rough guess, that he only spoke to obey his lordship, that he would refer it to some one else, at length made a proposal. The purchaser said, that for his part he was very well satisfied, and, as though he had misunderstood, named double the sum; he would not allow his mistake to be rectified, and cut short, or concluded every remark, by inviting the company to dinner at his castle the day after the wedding, where the agreement should be drawn up in form.

"Ah!" said Don Abbondio to himself, when he had returned home, "if the plague always and everywhere altered things after this manner, it would, indeed, be a sin to call it an evil. There should almost be a plague every generation; nay, one would even endure falling sick oneself—to recover again, however."

The dispensation was procured, the discharge granted, and the happy day having at length arrived, the Betrothed proceeded with an air of triumphal security to their own church, where, by Don Abbondio's own lips, they were pronounced husband and wife. Another, and still more singular triumph, was their visit to the castle; and we leave the reader to imagine what thoughts must have passed through their minds during the ascent thither, at their entrance through that portal; and what were the remarks made by each, according to his or her peculiar character. We will only notice, that in the midst of their joy, now one, and now another remarked, that to complete the happiness of the festival, poor Father Cristoforo was wanting. "But," added they, "he himself is certainly happier than we."

The Marquis received them with great attention; he conducted them into a dining hall, placed the married pair at table, together with Agnese and the good widow; and before retiring to dine elsewhere with Don Abbondio, stayed a short time with his guests, and even assisted in waiting upon them. Let no one, however, take it into his head that it would have been much simpler to have had merely one table. I have told you that he was an excellent man, but not what would now be called an original; I have told you that he was humble, but not that he was a prodigy of humility. He was humble enough to wait upon these good people, but not to appear their equal.

After the two dinners, the contract was prepared by a doctor, but this was not *Azzecca-garbugli*! He, or rather I should say, his remains, were and are

still at Canterelli. And for such of my readers as are not out of that part of the country, I myself feel that an explanation is requisite.

About half-a-mile above Lecco, and almost on the borders of the other village called Castello, is a place called Canterelli, where two roads cross; on one side of this place is seen an eminence, an artificial mound, with a cross upon it; and this is no other than an immense heap of dead bodies, the bodies of those who perished from the contagion. It is true tradition only says simply, of those who died during the plague; but assuredly it must be this plague of which we write, for it was the most terrible, and the last which is remembered. And you know very well, that traditions, unless you assist them, say but little by themselves.

On their return there was nothing disagreeable, except that Renzo was somewhat incommoded by the weight of the *quattrini* which he carried away with him. But, as you already know, he had endured far greater misfortunes. We will not speak of the labour of his mind (which, however, was not little), in considering which would be the best way to employ his money. To have seen all the various projects which passed through his mind, his reflections, his imaginations, and to have heard his reasons for and against agriculture or trade, you would have fancied that two academies of the last century had met for argument. But for him the embarrassment was by far greater, for being but one man, it was impossible to say to him, "What need is there to select? both one and the other are excellent; in substance both means are the same; they are two things like legs; two walk better than one."

Now nothing more was to be thought of but packing up their possessions, and setting forth on their journey; the Tramaglino family for their new country, and the widow for Milan. Tears, expressions of gratitude, and promises to meet again, were many. Not less tender, with the exception of tears, was the leave-taking of Renzo with his friendly host; and do not imagine that the separation from Don Abbondio was a cold affair. These good creatures had always preserved a certain respectful attachment for their Curate; and even he, in the bottom of his heart, had always wished them well. It was all these blessed affairs which had troubled their affection.

Some one may ask whether they experienced no grief at quitting their native village and mountains; certainly they did, for doubtlessly this grief is felt by all. However, it could not have been very strong, since they might have avoided it by remaining at home, now that the two great impediments, Don Rodrigo and the sentence of banishment, had been removed. But already for some time they had accustomed themselves to regard as their home, the country whither they were going. Renzo had brought it into favour with the women, relating all the facilities which were there offered to workmen, and a hundred things about the delightful life that was led there. Besides, they had all of them passed many bitter moments in the country upon which they had turned their backs; and still the sorrowful memories of those times embittered the scenes connected with them.

What will the reader say when he hears that Renzo had scarcely arrived and settled himself in his adopted country, before he found fresh annoyances ready pre-

pared for him? These were vexatious doubtless; but little is requisite to disturb a happy condition. Here, in a few words, is the cause of his trouble.

The great talk which Lucia had occasioned in this place, long before she arrived there; the knowledge of Renzo's having endured so much for her sake, and his firmness and constancy; perhaps also a few words spoken by some partial friend, had given rise to a certain curiosity about the young girl, and had excited great expectation of her beauty. You know very well what kind of a thing is expectation; it is imaginative, credulous, and confident; and when disappointed, difficult to satisfy, and scornful: it never meets with as much as it desires, because, in fact, it does not know what it would have. When Lucia, therefore, appeared, many who believed she must have hair like very gold, cheeks like roses, and the most splendid eyes in the world, began to shrug their shoulders and turn up their noses, saying, 'Ah, is this the girl? After so much time, so much talk, one expected something better. What is she then? A peasant girl, like many others. Why, there are plenty as handsome, and handsomer than her, every where.' Then examining her minutely, one discovered *this* defect, another that; there were some even who found her ugly.

However, as no one went and said these things to Renzo's face, there was no great evil so far. But what caused the mischief were certain remarks that got reported to him; and Renzo, as was but natural, was touched to the quick. He began to reflect upon these remarks, and complain about them, both to those who talked with him and to himself:—"What then

does it concern you? What, did I say you should expect so much? Did I ever come to talk to you about her? to tell you that she was so beautiful? And when you asked me, did I ever tell you more than that she was an excellent girl? She is a peasant! Did I ever say that I should bring you a princess? She does not please you? then don't look at her. You have beautiful women, look at them."

And only see how sometimes a trifle is enough to decide the condition of a man for the whole of his life! Had Renzo been obliged to pass his in this place, according to his first design, he would not have led a very gay one. From having been disgusted, he now, in his turn, became disagreeable. He was uncivil with every one, for each acquaintance might be one of Lucia's critics. There was something indescribably sardonic in all his words; in every thing he also found something to criticise; so that did it happen to rain two days together, he would exclaim, "O the delightful country!" He was become disagreeable to all, even to persons who at first had wished him well; and in time, what with one thing and another, he would have found himself at war with almost all the population, without perhaps himself being aware of the first cause of so great an evil.

But it might be said that the plague had taken upon itself to repair all his follies. It had carried off the master of another silk manufactory, situated almost at the gates of Bergamo; and the heir, a dissipated young fellow, who throughout the whole edifice could find nothing amusing, had determined to sell it even for half its value; but he desired to have the money paid immediately, in order to employ it directly in

unproductive gratification. This reached the ears of Bartolo, and he hastened to see the manufactory; he treated—a better bargain could not be imagined: but then the condition of prompt payment spoilt all for the money which he had laid aside, by little and little, was still far from amounting to the necessary sum. He partly gave his word to the proprietor: hastened back with speed; communicated the affair to his cousin, and proposed to him to join in the undertaking. Such an excellent proposal as this, entirely put an end to Renzo's economical doubts, for he immediately decided upon trade, and agreed to his cousin's idea. They went together, and the agreement was made. When the new masters settled on their new property, Lucia, whom no one expected, not only escaped all critical remarks, but one may say that she did not even displease; and Renzo learned that more than one person had asked, 'have you seen the beautiful simpleton who has come here?' The epithet made him pass over the substantive.

And even the annoyance he had experienced in the other place, remained a useful lesson for him. Before, he himself had been a little too ready in passing his judgment, and was easily led to criticise other people's wives, or in fact, anything else. Now he had learned that words spoken and heard are two different things; and he accustomed himself to reflect a little upon his own before he uttered them.

Do not, however, imagine that even here, our friends were exempt from all trouble. Man, says our Anonymous—and the reader will already have learned from experience that he takes a strange pleasure in moralising on similar themes; and as this is for the

last time, we will pardon him—man, as long as he remains on this earth, resembles a patient who lies upon a couch, more or less uneasy, and who, seeing around him others well made, smooth and level on the outside, imagines that upon them he must find greater repose. But should he even succeed in changing his quarters, scarcely is he settled before he begins to feel here something pricking, there something pressing against him; in short, he finds himself in pretty much the same condition as before. And on this account, adds the Anonymous, one ought to think more about doing well, than being well, and then in the end we shall find ourselves happy. This is certainly somewhat far-fetched, and belonging to the taste of the seventeenth century; but in the main he is right. Henceforth, continues he, there were for our good people no sorrows nor embarrassments of equal importance with those which we have related; they continued to lead so tranquil and happy a life, that were we to describe it, you would be wearied to death.

Affairs on the whole, however, went on very well: at first there was a little trouble owing to the scarcity of workmen, and to the mistakes and pretensions of the few they could procure. Edicts were published, limiting wages; but spite of all this, things in the end took a better course. Another and more reasonable edict arrived from Venice, exempting for ten years all strangers who should come to dwell in the Venetian States, from every kind of taxation.

Before the end of the first year of their marriage, a beautiful creature came into the world; and as if to afford Renzo the opportunity of fulfilling his

magnanimous promise, it was a little girl; and you can easily imagine that it was called Maria. In the course of time others made their appearance, I do not know how many, and of both sexes; and Agnese carrying them about with her, one after the other, called them little rogues and smothered them with kisses. They were all well-disposed children; and Renzo wished them all to learn to read and write, saying, that since there was such a rascally thing in the world, they might at least profit by it.

It was delightful to hear him relate his adventures, and to hear how he always concluded by telling the important pieces of experience he had learned. "I have learned," said he, "not to rush into tumults; not to preach in the market-place; not to drink more than I require; not to hold the knocker of a door in my hand when hot-headed people are about; and not to fasten a little bell to my feet before reflecting what may arise out of it." And a hundred other things.

Lucia did not find this doctrine false in itself, but it did not satisfy her; it seemed to her that there was still something wanting. And having many times heard this same song, and having every time reflected upon it, she said one day to her moralist, "and what have I learned? I did not go in search of my misfortunes, they came in search of me. Unless," added she, sweetly smiling, "my folly was in wishing you well, and in promising myself to you."

Renzo, at first, remained somewhat embarrassed. After a long debate, and much reflection, they at length concluded, that misfortunes often arise from our own misconduct; yet that frequently the greatest prudence and innocence do not suffice to guard us from them;

but that when they do come, either owing to our own fault or not, confidence in God softens them, and renders them useful in preparing us for a better life. This conclusion, although it was drawn by poor peasants, appears to us so just, that we have thought of placing it here as the moral of our history.

If this history should not have entirely displeased you, feel some kindly sentiment towards the Anonymous, and the one who has arranged his papers. But if on the contrary, we have only succeeded in wearying you, rest assured that this was not our design.

THE END OF THE BETROTHED.

HISTORY
OF
THE COLUMN OF INFAMY.

THE COLUMN OF INFAMY.

INTRODUCTION.

THE judges who, at Milan, in 1630, condemned to the most fearful death certain individuals accused of having propagated the plague by means of certain inventions which were no less foolish than they were horrible, thought they had done a deed so worthy of remembrance, that in the very sentence of condemnation, after having decreed as additional punishment the demolition of the house of one of these unfortunate men, decreed still farther, that upon its site a column should be raised, which should be called The Column of Infamy, bearing an inscription which should transmit to posterity a knowledge of the crime and of its punishment. And in this they were not mistaken: this judgment was certainly a memorable one.

In a part of the former history, the author manifested his intention to publish an account of this judgment; it is this which he now presents to the public; not however without timidity, knowing that people have expected from him a work upon some mighty subject, should it boast of no other attraction, and of a corresponding length. But should the ridicule of the undeceived fall upon him, permit him at least to protest, that with regard to this error he is not to blame, and that should merely a mouse be

brought forth, he did not say that the mountains were in travail. He only said, that as an episode, such a history might appear too long, and that, although the subject had already been treated upon by a justly celebrated writer (Pietro Verri, in his *Observations upon Torture*), it appeared to him that it might be treated again with a different intent. A very few words regarding this act of inhumanity will suffice to make known the reason of his present attempt. One might almost say the utility, but that also will depend much more upon the execution than the intention.

Pietro Verri proposes, as the very title of his little work indicates, to deduce from this fact an argument against torture, shewing how by its means the confession of a crime physically and morally impossible, had been extorted. The argument was as forcible as the endeavour was noble and humane.

But from this history, however brief it may be, from a complicated event, from a great evil senselessly occasioned by men to their fellows, more general observations may be drawn, observations, if not of as immediate utility, at least as real. For contenting oneself with those observations which principally serve the peculiar intention of the author, there is great danger lest one form an idea of the fact, not only imperfect, but even false, by considering the ignorance of those times and the barbarity of the laws as the causes of this evil, and thus regarding it almost as a fatal and necessary event; which would be receiving a dangerous error instead of a useful instruction. Ignorance in natural philosophy may produce inconvenience, but not iniquity; and a bad institution does not enforce itself. Certainly it does not follow that if people

believed in the virtue of these pestiferous ointments, they must believe them employed by Guglielmo, Piazza, and Giangiacomo Mora; or that because torture was still in full force, it was necessary that the accused should endure it; or that all those who endured torture should be declared guilty. This is a truth which may appear even ridiculous, through its being so very self-evident; but not unfrequently the most self-evident truths, which ought to be understood, are forgotten; and upon the recollection of this truth depends the thorough understanding of this atrocious sentence. We have endeavoured to shew that these judges condemned innocent individuals, whose innocence they might have recognised, spite of the strongest faith in the efficacy of the ointments; and of a legislature which admitted torture, whilst to prove them guilty, to repulse the truth which every moment shewed itself on all sides under a thousand forms, written in characters as clear then as now, and as they will always be, they were obliged constantly to have recourse to cunning artifices and expedients, of the injustice of which they could not have been ignorant. We do not wish—it would be a melancholy task indeed—to deprive *ignorance* and torture of their share in this horrible transaction; the first was a deplorable cause of the evil, the other a cruel and active means, although certainly not the only one, nor yet even the principal means. But we consider it important to distinguish its true causes, which were wicked acts, arising only from depraved passions.

God alone has been able to distinguish which among these various passions has had more or less dominion in the hearts of these judges, and subdued

their wills; whether fury against unknown danger, which, impatient to find an object worthy of its wrath, had seized upon the first which presented itself; that fury which had received a desired piece of intelligence, and would not find it false, which had exclaimed, 'At length!' and would not say, 'We must begin again!' that fury, rendered cruel through long fear, and transformed into hatred and punctilio, when these unfortunates sought to escape out of its power; or fear lest they should fail to gratify the general expectation—an expectation as firmly rooted in the public mind as it is ridiculous—lest they might appear less skilful, discovering the accused to be innocent, lest by paying no heed to the cries of the multitude they might turn these very cries against themselves; fear, perhaps also, of serious public calamities which might be thereby occasioned; fear, less cowardly in appearance, but equally depraved, and not less miserable, when it usurps the place of a truly noble and truly wise fear—the fear of committing injustice. God alone has been able to see whether these Magistrates, finding individuals guilty of a crime which never existed, but which they desired,* were more accomplices or ministers to a multitude, which blinded, not by ignorance, but by malignity and madness, violated by these clamours the most positive precepts of the Divine law which they pretended to practice. But lying, abuse of power, violation of laws and rules the most universally received and adopted, and the employment of false weights and measures, are things recognisable among human acts, even by the eye of man; once recognised, they can only be

* *Ut mos vulgo, quamvis falsis, reum subdere.*—Tacit. Ann. i. 39.

ascribed to evil passions; and no causes, more natural or less melancholy, can be discovered to explain the principal acts of wickedness in this judgment, than this rage and this fear.

Alas! similar causes were only too frequent at a certain epoch; and it was not alone owing to errors in natural philosophy, and by means of torture, that these passions, as well as others, have led men—who were anything but scoundrels by profession—to commit wicked actions, whether in the tumult of public events, or in the more obscure relations of private life. “If but a single act of torture,” writes the author, whom we have already mentioned in terms of praise, “be prevented by the relation of horror which I lay before you, the painful sentiment which I experience will have been well employed, and the hope of obtaining this result shall be my recompense.”* And we, proposing to our patient readers to fix their attention anew upon horrors already known, believe that our endeavour will bring forth no ignoble fruit, should that indignation and horror, which no one can fail to experience each time the subject is mentioned, be directed principally against passions, which cannot be banished like false systems, or abolished like bad institutions, but which may be rendered less potent and less terrific, by recognizing them in their effects, and by learning to detest them.

And we do not hesitate to add, that there may still, in the midst of the most painful sentiments, be some ray of consolation. If, in a complication of atrocious deeds committed by man against his neighbour, we imagine we perceive an effect of the times

* Verri, *Osservazioni sulla Tortura*.

一、
二、
三、
四、
五、
六、
七、
八、
九、
十、
十一、
十二、
十三、
十四、
十五、
十六、
十七、
十八、
十九、
二十、
二十一、
二十二、
二十三、
二十四、
二十五、
二十六、
二十七、
二十八、
二十九、
三十、
三十一、
三十二、
三十三、
三十四、
三十五、
三十六、
三十七、
三十八、
三十九、
四十、
四十一、
四十二、
四十三、
四十四、
四十五、
四十六、
四十七、
四十八、
四十九、
五十、
五十一、
五十二、
五十三、
五十四、
五十五、
五十六、
五十七、
五十八、
五十九、
六十、
六十一、
六十二、
六十三、
六十四、
六十五、
六十六、
六十七、
六十八、
六十九、
七十、
七十一、
七十二、
七十三、
七十四、
七十五、
七十六、
七十七、
七十八、
七十九、
八十、
八十一、
八十二、
八十三、
八十四、
八十五、
八十六、
八十七、
八十八、
八十九、
九十、
九十一、
九十二、
九十三、
九十四、
九十五、
九十六、
九十七、
九十八、
九十九、
一百、

single instance perceived the personal and voluntary injustice of the judges. I have merely intended to say that he has not proposed to himself the task of observing in what this injustice consisted, much less that of demonstrating what was its principal, nay, more correctly speaking, its sole cause. And I may now add, that this he could not have done without injury to his peculiar intent. The partizans of torture—for the most absurd institutions so long as they are not utterly extinct will find partizans, and even when they are extinct, from the same reasons which caused their existence—would have discovered some justification. “Do you see,” they would have said, “the fault is in the abuse and not in the thing itself!” Truly, to shew that besides being always absurd, in one particular case it has been a tool in the hand of passion for the perpetration of the most ridiculous and atrocious deeds, would be a strange justification. But so is it understood by fixed opinion. And those of the other party who, like Verri, desired the abolition of torture, would have been discontented, seeing their cause confused by distinctions, and the horror which torture ought to inspire lessened, by partly ascribing the blame to something else. Thus at least it generally happens, that he who desires to bring to light a contested truth, finds that his partizans as well as his adversaries equally prevent his presenting it in its simple form. It is true certainly that there remains for him the great mass of mankind which has embraced no party, which is without pre-occupation, without passion, and which troubles itself very little about truth in any shape.

With regard to the materials which we have made use of in the compilation of this short history, we ought in the very first place to state that our quest after the original trial, although facilitated, aided even by the most generous and active complaisance, has only served to persuade us more fully that it is absolutely lost. Of a considerable portion, however, there still remains a copy; and that owing to the following circumstance. Among the miserable accused, there chanced to be, through the fault, alas! of a fellow prisoner, a personage of importance, Don Giovanni Gaetano de Padilla, son of the commandant of the castle of Milan, knight of St. Jago, and captain of horse. This gentleman was able to get his defence printed; and adorned it with an extract from the trial, which had been communicated to him in his character of accused criminal. And certainly little did these judges then suspect that they were thus permitting a printer to raise a more sufficient and durable monument than the one they had intrusted to the architect.

Beside this extract, there exists another manuscript copy, in certain passages less full of detail, in others more so, which belonged to the Count Pietro Verri, and later to his most worthy son the Count Gabriele, who with liberal courtesy has left it to our disposal. It is this copy which the illustrious writer made use of in the composition of the small work which we have quoted, and it is filled with notes, which are either passing reflections, or sudden expressions of sorrowful compassion, or holy indignation. Its title is: "*Summarium offensiv contra Don Johannem Cajetanum de Padilla,*" and in this manuscript are found

many things given at considerable length, of which in the printed extract there is merely a summary. In the margin are noted the pages of the original trial, from whence these different facts are extracted; besides this, there are many short Latin annotations in the same characters as the text: "*Detentio Moræ; descriptio Domini Johannis; Adversatur commissario; Inverisimile; Inverisimile Subgestio,*" and similar ones, which are evidently notes made by Padilla's advocate for his defence. From all which it appears evident, that this is a literal copy of the authentic extract which was communicated to Padilla's advocate; and that he, in having it printed, has omitted various things as of less importanee, and has satisfied himself with merely mentioning others. But how happens it that certain things are found in the printed document which are wanting in the manuscript? Probably Padilla's advocate may have again pillaged the original trial, and made a second selection of such particulars as appeared to him most useful in his client's cause.

From these two abridgments we have naturally extracted all that we could; and as the first—formerly very rare—has been reprinted within a short time, the reader can, if he please, by comparing the two, recognise the passages which we have taken from the manuscript copy.

The defences to which we have already referred, have furnished us with divers facts, and with the material of some observations. And as these have never been printed, and as copies of them are very rare, we shall not fail to quote from them every time that we may have occasion.

Finally, we have been able to gather some trifling

details from among the few scattered authentic documents which have remained from that epoch of confusion and dispersion, and which are preserved in those archives referred to more than once in the preceding history.

After a brief history of the trial, we have thought that it would not be out of place to give a still shorter history of the opinion which, until the time of Verri, was entertained regarding it, that is, during a century and a half. We mean the opinion expressed in books, which is for the most part the only opinion posterity can know, and which, in every case, has its especial importance. In the present instance it strikes us that it may be a curious thing to see a succession of writers following one after the other, like Dante's sheep, without their ever thinking it necessary to inform themselves upon a subject regarding which they fancy they must write,—I do not say an amusing thing, for after having witnessed this cruel conflict, this horrible victory of error over truth, and of powerful fury over unarmed innocence, one cannot hear without displeasure, I might almost say without rage, let them proceed from whatsoever lips they may, words which confirm and exalt error, this declaration so positive, based upon a belief so carelessly formed, these maledictions uttered against the victims, this onesided indignation. But this indignation brings an advantage along with it, for it increases our aversion and distrust of this old custom of repeating facts without examination, a custom which has never yet been sufficiently brought into disrepute.

We had at first thought of presenting our reader, at the conclusion of our history, with a collection

of the various opinions concerning this fact, which we have met with in all the books we have consulted. But fearing we might try his patience too severely, we have confined ourselves to a few authors, not one of whom is quite unknown, whilst the greater number are renowned, that is, to those authors whose errors may be instructive when they have ceased to be contagious.

CHAPTER I.

ON the morning of the 21st of June, 1630, towards half-past four o'clock, a woman of humble condition, named Caterina Rosa, chanced unfortunately to be standing at a window of the covered gallery which then existed at the entrance of the street *della Vetta de Cittadini*, on the side which leads to the *Corso* of the *Porta Ticinese*, almost opposite the columns of San Lorenzo. She saw a man approach; he wore a black cloak, his hat was drawn over his eyes, and in one hand he carried a paper, "upon which," says she in her deposition, "he placed the other as in the act of writing." She perceived how, when entering the street, he neared the walls of the first houses which he came to after turning the corner; and how, from time to time, he drew his hands along the walls. "Then," added she, "it came into my mind that perhaps this man was one of those who for the last few days had been anointing the walls." Seized with this suspicion, she passed into another room from whence she could see the length of the street, so as to keep her eye upon the Unknown, as he advanced along it, "and saw," says she, "that he continued to touch the said walls with his hand."

Now, at the window of another house in the same street there stood another spectator, called Ottavia Bono; but it would be difficult to say whether she

conceived at the time this same foolish suspicion, or only when the other had caused the general excitement. Upon her being also examined, she deposed to having seen this man from the moment he entered the street; but she makes no mention of his having touched the walls during his progress along the street. "I saw (says she) that he stopped at the bottom of the garden wall belonging to the house of the Crivelli. I saw that he held a paper in his left hand, placing upon it his right, as though he were writing, and then I saw that he raised his hand from the paper, and rubbed it upon the said garden wall, where was something white." This was probably to clean his fingers, which were stained with ink, for it appears that he was in reality writing. In fact, when questioned the next day in the examination which he had to endure, 'whether his action that morning had any connexion with writing?' he replied, 'Yes, My Lord.' And with regard to his having passed close under the wall (if so simple a circumstance require an explanation), it was only because it rained, as this very same Caterina herself declares, but only to draw from the fact the following inference: "and this is an important thing; yesterday, whilst this man acted as if anointing the wall, it rained, and one is led to think that he chose this rainy time because more people would be liable to get their clothes smeared with it, when seeking shelter."

After a short pause, the Unknown turned back, and taking the same road arrived at the corner, and was about to disappear, when by another unfortunate chance he was met by some one who entered the street, and who saluted him. Caterina, who, desirous

of keeping the anointer in sight as long as she could, had returned to the first window, now demanded of the other man, 'who it was he had saluted;' and he, as he afterwards deposed, only knowing the supposed anointer by sight, told her all he could, which was merely that he was a Commissioner of the Tribunal of Health. "And I told him (continued Caterina) that I had seen certain gestures of his which did not please me at all. This business was quickly spread about," that is, it was she who principally helped to spread it; "every one went out of their doors, and the walls were found all daubed with a certain kind of stuff, which seemed greasy and inclining to yellow; especially the people living in the Tradate said, that they found the walls of the entrance passage all smeared." The other woman said the same. When asked, 'whether she knew for what purpose this man rubbed his hand over the wall?' she replied, "afterwards the walls, especially those of the entrance to the Tradate, were found anointed."

And a circumstance which would have appeared very improbable in a romance, but which illustrates only too fully the blindness of passion, is, that it never once occurred either to one party or the other that in describing step by step the walk this man had taken in the street, they were unable to say whether he had entered this passage in question; and doubtless it did not appear "an important thing" to them, that this man should have waited until the sun had risen before doing such an act, and gone thither with so little circumspection that he did not even cast a glance towards the windows; or that he tranquilly retraced his steps through the same street, as though

it were the custom of malefactors to remain longer than necessary in the scene of their crime; that he had handled with impunity a substance which was to cause death to such as should *get it smeared on their clothes*, or a thousand other improbabilities equally strange. But the most singular and atrocious circumstance is that these did not appear improbabilities to the interrogators, and that not a single explanation was demanded. Or, if such were demanded, the fact of these explanations not being mentioned in the trial makes the affair still worse.

The neighbours, whose fear caused them to discover filth, which probably they had had under their eyes heaven knows how long without troubling themselves about it, now in all haste commenced cleansing the stains with burning straw. It appeared to the barber, Giangiacomo Mora, who lived at the corner, that the walls of his house had likewise been anointed. He did not know, the unfortunate man, the other danger which menaced him, and that, owing to this very Commissioner, who was much more unfortunate than he.

The relation of these women was soon enriched by fresh circumstances; or perhaps the history they narrated immediately to their neighbours, was not equal in all respects to the one afterwards repeated to the Minister of Justice. The son of the poor Mora, being questioned later, "Whether he knew, or had ever heard say, in what manner the said Commissioner had anointed the said walls and houses," replied, "I have heard that one of the women, who lives above the arch which crosses the Vedra, the name of which I do not know, said that the Com-

missioner anointed with a pen, carrying in the other hand a small vase." It is very possible that this Caterina spoke of a pen which she did really see in the hand of the Unknown; and every one may easily divine what was this other object which she mistook for a small vase, and called such; for, in a mind which only dreamed of anointers, a pen must have had a far more intimate connexion with a vase than with an inkstand.

But amidst all this gossip, one little circumstance had not been forgotten, which was, that this man was a Commissioner of the Tribunal of Health, and by means of this knowledge it was soon discovered that he was a Guglielmo Piazza, "son of the midwife Paola," who was a woman very well known in the neighbourhood. The intelligence spread itself soon through other quarters of the city, or was carried thither by some one who had chanced to pass by during the time of confusion. One of these conversations was reported to the Senate, who ordered the Minister of Justice to hasten immediately to collect information, and proceed as the case should direct.

"It has been signified to the Senate, that yesterday morning the walls and doors of the houses in the *Vedra de' Cittadini* were anointed with deadly ointments," said the Minister of Justice to the Notary whom he took with him upon this expedition. And with these words, already full of a deplorable certainty, and which passed without correction from the lips of the multitude to those of the magistrates, the trial opened.

Seeing this firm persuasion, this foolish terror of a chimerical attempt, one cannot do less than recall

something similar which occurred in various parts of Europe but a few years ago, during the time of the cholera. Except that, with but few exceptions, this time the more enlightened classes did not participate in the wicked delusion, but, for the most part, even did all they could to combat it; and nowhere would a single tribunal have been found exerting its power over similarly accused unfortunates, except to remove them from the fury of the multitude. Certainly this is a great amendment, but it were far greater could one feel certain that upon an occasion of the same kind there would no longer be a single individual found dreaming of such attempts, for which it would not be necessary to believe all danger ceased of falling into similar errors, errors similar in character if not in their object. Man is only too liable to deceive himself, to deceive himself terribly, with much less extravagance. This suspicion and this exasperation itself spring equally from misfortunes which may very well, and often, have their origin in human malice; and suspicion and exasperation, unless they are restrained by reason and charity, possess the sad virtue of causing the unfortunate to be seized as criminals upon the vainest pretext or the most rash assertion. As an example of this, in modern times, but a short time previous to the cholera, when incendiarism had become so prevalent in Normandy, what proof was needed to persuade a whole multitude that any man was its author? The mere fact of his being the first person found near the spot, or in the neighbourhood; of his being unknown, or not being able to give a satisfactory account of himself (a thing doubly difficult when the one who replies is terrified, and those who

question are furious); nay it were enough for him to be pointed out by a woman, who might be another Caterina Rosa, or by some child, who, himself suspected of being a tool in the hands of others, and constrained to say that he had been sent by some one to light the fire, pronounced the first name that occurred to him. Happy those judges before whom such victims appeared (for more than once the multitude executed their own sentence); happy the judges if they entered the hall persuaded that as yet they knew nothing; if no echo of the tumult without remained in their minds; if they recollected that they were not the country (as is often said by one of those metaphors, which cause the real and essential character of the thing to be lost sight of), an unhappy and cruel metaphor in those cases regarding which the country has already formed a judgment without having had the means so to do; but that they were men exclusively invested with a sacred, necessary, fearful power, to decide whether men were guilty or innocent.

The person to whom the Minister of Justice was referred for information could only relate one thing, which was, that passing through the street *della Vedra*, the day before, she had seen people purifying their walls with fire, and had heard say that the walls had been anointed that morning by a son-in-law of the midwife Paola. The Minister of Justice and the Notary betook themselves to this street, and saw in fact the walls all smoked, and a certain house, that of the barber Mora, freshly whitewashed. They were told by divers individuals who were there, that this had been done because people had found that the walls were anointed. "As likewise, the said Signor Capi-

tano and myself," writes the Notary, "saw in those places which were blackened with fire some traces of an unctuous matter, approaching a yellow colour, smeared about as if by the finger." What a recognition of the *Corpus delecti*!

A woman from the house *de' Tradati* was examined, who said that they had found "the walls of the entrance daubed with something yellow, of which there was a great quantity." The two women whose depositions we have related, were examined; certain other persons also, none of whom, however, related anything new, and also the man who had saluted the Commissioner. Being asked, "Whether, passing through the *Vedra de' Cittadini*, he had himself seen these daubed walls," he replied, "I had no idea of such a thing, for until then no such things had been spoken about."

Already, however, had an order to arrest Piazza been issued, and it was soon put into execution. The same day, the 22d of June, "a soldier, belonging to the company of Baricello di Campagna, relates to the aforesaid Signor Capitano, who was in his carriage on his way home, how, passing the house of the senator Monti, President of the Tribunal of Health, he had discovered the aforesaid Guglielmo the Commissioner standing before the door, and how, in execution of the order given him, he had conducted Guglielmo to prison."

Certainly the ignorance of the times suffices not to explain how the security of this unhappy man should not in the slightest degree have served to diminish the judges' prejudice. The flight of an accused person is considered as a sign of his guilt, but when it is

seen that an accused does not fly even before such an accusation, is not that a fact which ought to lead the judges to form a contrary opinion? But it would be ridiculous to demonstrate that men may see things which others have not been able to see; for, after all, men may not wish to trouble themselves about such matters.

The house of Piazza was immediately visited and thoroughly searched, "*in omnibus arcis, capsis, scriniis, caucellis, sublectis,*" to discover whether there were any vases of ointment, or any money; but nothing was found, "*nihil penitus compertum fuit.*" But the accused gained not the slightest advantage from the circumstance either, as one only sees too clearly from the examination which he underwent that same day by the Minister of Justice, assisted by a judge, probably a member of the Tribunal of Health.

He was questioned regarding his profession, his habitual occupations, the walk which he had taken the previous day, regarding also the dress he wore and finally he was asked, "Whether he knew that certain smears had been discovered upon the walls in the city, especially in the neighbourhood of the *Porta Ticinese*." He replied, "I know nothing about it for I did not once stop in *Porta Ticinese*." He was told that "this was not probable;" they endeavoured to demonstrate to him that he must know. Four times the same question was demanded, and four times he returned the same answer, but in different words. They passed on to other things, but with no other object in view; for we shall see later with what cruel malice the judge insisted upon this pretended improbability, and how he went in search of some others.

Among the deeds of the preceding day, of which Piazza had spoken, he had chanced to mention being with some deputies of a parish. These were gentlemen elected in each parish by the Tribunal of Health, to traverse the city and put the orders of the Tribunal into execution. He was asked the names of those with whom he had been; he replied that he knew them only by sight, and could not tell their names. Even to this they replied, "that is not probable." Terrible words; to understand the importance of which some general observations are needful regarding the law proceedings of those times, observations which unfortunately cannot be very short.

CHAPTER II.

THE practice of the law, as every one knows, is principally regulated in Milan, as in almost every part of Europe, by the authority of writers; and this from a very simple reason, that in the greater number of cases there is no other rule by which to act. There has never existed a compilation of laws composed with one general intent, and from this circumstance have sprung two natural consequences; that the interpreters of these laws have made themselves legislators, and that to a certain degree they have been accepted as such; since if necessary measures are not taken by those whose mission it is, or are taken in such a manner as to be unserviceable, there will equally arise in one party the desire to take these measures, and in the other the disposition to accept them, let them have been taken by whomsoever they may. To labour without rules is the most wearying and most difficult thing in the world.

The statutes of Milan, for example, prescribed to the legislative power—a power implicitly admitted and henceforth regarded as co-existent with the right of judgment—no other rules or conditions for putting a man to torture, than that the accusation should be confirmed by report, that the crime should be capital, and that there should be evidence,* but without

* *Statuta criminalia, Rubrica generalis de forma citationis in criminalibus; De Tormentis, sen questionibus.*

specifying what evidence. Roman law, still in operation in such cases as were unprovided for by other statutes, said nothing more, although employing more words: "Judges ought not to commence by torture, but should at first make use of likely and probable arguments, and if, conducted by these arguments as by sure evidence, they believe it necessary to employ torture in order to discover the truth, let them employ it, should the condition of the criminal permit."* Thus in this law is expressly recognised the right possessed by the judge to decide upon the quality and value of the evidence, a right which later was implied in the statutes of Milan.

In the new constitutions promulgated by order of Charles V, torture is not even named; and from that time until the epoch of our trial, and long afterwards, are a vast number of legislative acts to be found in which torture is intimated as a punishment; but I do not know of a single one which lays down rules for its adoption as a means by which to arrive at the truth.

The reason of this is easily to be perceived: the effect had become the cause; the legislators here, as elsewhere, had discovered a something which would supply the place of what we call the proceedings at law, a something which not only caused its intervention to be less felt, but caused that necessity for this intervention almost to be forgotten. The writers, especially since the time when simple commentaries upon the Roman laws became less frequent, and when the number of works composed in a more independent spirit, whether upon common law in general, or re-

* *Cod. lib. ix; Tit. xli. de questionibus, i. 8.*

garding some point in particular, became more considerable, the writers treated the subject in a complex manner, and with a minute and laborious examination of all its points; they multiplied the laws by means of interpreting them, extending by analogy the application of them to other cases, and deducing general rules from special laws; and when this did not suffice even by supplying some of their own, in conformity to such rules as appeared to them the best founded upon reason, equity, and natural right, now of account among themselves; or even copying and citing each other, now opposed in their sentiments; and the judges, learned men, and even some authors, have almost in every case, and in every particular in the case, given their opinions to be either followed or chosen. Law, I say, was become a science; thus a the science, that is to Roman Jurisprudence interpreted by it, to those ancient laws of various countries which the study and increasing authority of Roman jurisprudence had not cast into oblivion, and which in their turn were commented upon by the science to the usages approved of by it, and to its precepts which had passed into usages, was appropriated almost wholly the title of *law*. The acts of sovereign authority, whatsoever they might be, were called Orders, Decrees, Proclamations, and similar names implying an idea of something accidental or temporary. To give an example of this: the proclamations issued by the Governors of Milan, who were also endowed with legislative authority, were only of value so long as the government of their authors lasted; and the first act of a new governor was to confirm provisionally the acts of his predecessor. Each *gridsan*.

as they were called, was a species of Prætor's edict, composed a little at a time, and upon divers occasions. The science, on the contrary, always at work, and at work upon every thing; modifying itself, but always insensibly; having only for masters those who had commenced by being its disciples, was, I might almost say, a constant revision, a continued compilation of the Twelve Tables, confided or abandoned to a perpetual Decemvirate.

This general and enduring authority, exercised by private individuals over the laws, was later, when both the propriety and possibility of abolishing it through the enactment of new and better laws was perceived, was, I say, and, if I do not deceive myself, is still regarded as a strange fact—as a fact fatal to humanity, especially as regards criminal affairs, and more especially as regards the proceedings. We have already observed, how naturally all this was brought about; and besides, this was no new fact, but only, if I may be allowed the expression, an extension of a very ancient fact, one which, perhaps, under certain modifications may be considered lasting; for, however perfected the laws may be, they will never cease to require interpreters, neither will judges, perhaps, ever cease to refer, more or less, to the most renowned of these interpreters, as to men who have expressly, and with a general intent, studied the subject before them. And I know not whether a more calm and accurate examination would not prove that this was even, comparatively and relatively, a good thing; for it succeeded to a much worse state of things.

In fact, it would be difficult for men who study a

number of possible cases, seeking at the same time in the interpretation of positive laws, or in more universal and elevated principles, the rules to which these cases may be reduced, to counsel more iniquitous, more foolish, more violent, or more capricious things, than arbitrary power may in so many instances counsel where the judgment is so easily swayed by passion. The very number of these volumes and of these authors, the multiplicity, and, I might even say, the progressive dividing and subdividing of the rules which they themselves prescribe, would be an indication of a desire to restrain arbitrary power, or to direct it (as far as possible) by reason and justice. for so many words are not required to instruct men in the misuse of power, when the occasion offers: people do not labour at harnessing a horse, which they will leave free to follow his own fancies; they rather remove from his neck the bridle, if he have one.

But this is what generally happens in human reforms, in those reforms which have taken place gradually (I speak of true reforms; not of all the changes which have assumed the name of reform); to the first Reformers it appeared a great matter to modify, to correct, to abolish, and to amplify. Their successors—and in many instances these successors came a long time after—finding, and with reason, affairs still in a bad state, easily attack the nearest cause, cursing, as authors of the evil, those whose name it bears, for having given it that form under which it still continues to exist and flourish.

It appears that the author of the "Observations upon Torture," together with other illustrious men

of his age, have fallen into this error—this almost *enviable* error, we might say—so connected is it with great and benevolent designs. In the same degree that he employs powerful and profound reasoning to demonstrate the absurdity, the injustice, and the cruelty of this abominable practice, does he hasten to attribute what is most odious in it to those writers who have written upon the subject. Yet certainly it is not through forgetfulness of our inferiority that we are inspired with the courage to freely contradict, as we are about to do, the opinion of so illustrious a man, contained in so generous a work; but it is from confidence in the advantage possessed by us, of coming after him, and of being able (regarding as the principal point that which for him was merely an accessory) to observe with a more tranquil gaze, in the complication of its effects, and in the difference of times, as something dead, or become historical—a fact which he had to combat as something still in existence, as an actual obstacle in the path of new and very desirable reforms. And in every way is the fact so connected with his and our argument, that we have both been naturally led to say something general regarding it: Verri, because the authority being recognised at the epoch of the iniquitous judgment, was induced to imagine it the accomplice, or, in a great measure, the cause; we, because observing what it prescribed and taught by the lips of private individuals, make use of it as a subsidiary, yet very important “criterium” to demonstrate with greater force the iniquity—one might say, the individual iniquity of this judgment.

“It is certain,” remarks this ingenious yet pre-

judiced author, " that there is nothing found written in our laws, either regarding the persons who may be put to torture, or the occasions when it should be applied, or the manner of torture, whether by fire, or through the dislocation or tearing of the members, or regarding the length of time the torment should be inflicted, or the number of times it should be repeated."*

Nevertheless, torture was prescribed in our laws, in those of a vast portion of Europe, and in the Roman laws, which were for so long, both in name and effect, the general law of nations. The question is, therefore, to know whether the Interpreters of the Criminal Laws (we will designate them by this name, so as to distinguish them from those men who had the merit and the good fortune to banish these laws for ever), whether these Interpreters ever succeeded in rendering torture more or less horrible than when in the hands of arbitrary power, to which the law had almost entirely abandoned it? Verri himself has in this very book adduced, or at least indicated, the strongest proof in their favour. "Farinaccio himself," said the illustrious writer, "speaking of his times, assures us that the judges, from the pleasure they experienced in torturing the accused, invented new modes of torture." Here are his words: "*Judices qui propter delectationem, quam habent torquendi reos, inveniunt novas tormentorum species.*"†

I have said, *in their favour*, for the injunction addressed to the judges to abstain from inventing new modes of torture, and their reproofs and lamentations

* Verri, *Observations upon Torture*.

† Verri, *Obs.—Farin, Praxis et Theon. criminatis, quæst. xxxviii.*, 56.

which at once attest to the unrestrained and inventive cruelty of arbitrary power, and to a desire, if nothing else, to reprimand and dishonour it, are, I might almost say, much less the work of Farinani, than of the lawyers in general. The very words transcribed above were extracted by the Doctor from a much older writer, Francesco dal Bruno, who in his turn quotes them from one yet more ancient, Angelo d'Arezzo, with others equally grave and severe, which we here translate: "Cruel and wicked judges, who will one day be confounded by God; ignorant judges, for the wise man abhorreth such things, and with the light of virtue giveth form to science."

Long before, in the thirteenth century, Guido da Suzara, writing upon torture, and applying to this argument the words of a rescript of Constantius, regarding the custody of the criminal, says, that it is his intent "to impose some moderation upon the judges, who commit cruelties without measure"*

In the following century, Baldo applied the celebrated rescript of Constantine against the master who kills his slave, "to the judges who tear the flesh of the criminal in order to make him confess;" and desires that if the victim die under the torture, the judge may be beheaded, as though guilty of homicide.†

Later, Paride dal Pozzo inveighs against those judges who, "thirsting after blood, long for murder, not so much as a means of reparation and example as for their own glory (*propter gloriam eorum*), and who on this account ought to be regarded as homicides."‡

* Guid. de Suza, *de Tormentis*, I.—*Cod. lib. ix. tit. 4; de Custodia reorum*, 1, 2.

† Baldi, *ad lib. ix. Cod. tit. xiv. de Emendatione servorum*, ii.

‡ Par. de Puteo, *de Syndicatu, in verbo, Crudelitas officialis*, 5.

“Let the judge beware of adopting unusual modes of torture; for he who does so is more worthy to be called an executioner than a judge,” writes Galí Claro.”*

“It is necessary to raise a voice (*clamandum* est) against those severe and cruel judges who, to acquire a vain glory, and by this means rise to higher posts, inflict upon miserable criminals, new species of torments,” writes Antonio Gomez.†

Pleasure and glory! what passions to be excited by such an object! Exquisite delight in torturing men, pride in subduing prisoners! But at all events we cannot believe that those who unveiled these passions intended to favour them.

To these testimonials (and similar ones will be presently adduced), we will here add that, in all the works we have consulted upon this subject, we have never chanced to meet with lamentations because these judges employed tortures which were too simple. And could such a thing be pointed out to us in the works which we have seen, it would be indeed a curiosity.

Some of the names which we have quoted, and which we have still to mention, are placed by Veyra in a list of “writers who, had they exposed their cruel doctrines, and the methodical description of their refined torture in the vulgar tongue, and in a style of coarseness and barbarity of which would not have prevented sensible and cultivated minds from examining them, would have been only regarded in the same light as the executioner, that is, with horror and

* J. Clari, *Sententiarum receptarum*, lib. v.

† Gomez, *Variar*, resol. t. iii. c. 13, *de Tortura reorum*, 5.

ignominy." Certainly, it would be impossible to experience too much horror at the deeds which are revealed to us. But the little we have already seen ought to make us doubt whether horror and ignominy would be a just recompense for the indignation which they expressed, or have wished to express.

It is true that in their books, or, more correctly speaking, in some of their books, we find the different kinds of torture more frequently described than in the laws, but only as established and long standing usages, never as inventions of the writers' imagination; and Ippolito Marsigli, a writer and judge of the fifteenth century, who formed a horrible, strange, and repulsive list of these various modes of torture, from his own experience, calls all judges who invented fresh ones, "brutes."*

There were, it is true, writers who discussed the question of how many times the torture might be repeated; but (as we shall have occasion to see), only to impose limits and conditions upon arbitrary will, profiting by the undetermined and ambiguous rules laid down by the Roman law.

It is true, there were also those who treated upon the duration of the agony; but only in this instance to place some restraint over the indefatigable cruelty which was unrestrained by the law, and upon 'certain judges, not less ignorant than wicked, who torment a man for three or four hours,' writes Farinacci;† and over 'certain most wicked and most abominable judges, who raised from the dregs of the people,

* Hipp. de Marsiliis, *ad tit. Dig. de questionibus, leg. In criminibus*, 29.

† *Praxis*, etc. *Quæst.* xxxviii. 54.

without science, virtue, or reason, have no sooner the accused in their power, perhaps wrongfully (*forte indebite*), than they can only speak to him whilst putting him to the torture; and who, should he not confess what they desire, leave him hanging to the rack a whole day or night,' wrote Marsigli,* about a century earlier.

In these passages, and in some quoted above, one may observe how these writers endeavoured to associate with cruelty the idea of ignorance; and therefore, recommended in the name of *science*, not less than in the name of conscience, moderation, benignity, and gentleness: words which call forth one's indignation as applied to such a thing; but which, nevertheless, shew us that the intention of these writers is rather to soothe the monster than to provoke him.

With regard then to persons who might be subjected to torture, I see little in their not being specified in those laws which were peculiarly our own. when there was so much relating to this melancholy subject in the Roman laws, which, in reality, were also our own laws.

"Ignorant and ferocious men," continues Verri "who, without examining from whence proceeds the right of punishing crimes, what is the object of punishment, by what rule these crimes are to be measured, what proportion there ought to exist between the crime and the punishment, whether a man may not be constrained to renounce his own defence, and similar principles, only from being intimately acquainted with which one can draw natural conclusions—conclusions the most accordant

* *Practica causarum criminalium, in verbo. Expedita, 36.*

with reason and with the good of society; these men, I say, obscure private individuals, with the most perfect refinement of cruelty, reduced to a system and published the science of torturing other men, with the same calmness with which you might describe the art of healing some disease of the human frame; and they were obeyed as legislators, their books made a serious and calm object of study, and lawyers collected together in their law libraries these cruel authors, who taught how to dislocate the members of living men by means of ingenious spasms, rendering by an increase of time and torture the agony and destruction still more horrible and acute."

But how could so much authority be conceded to obscure and ignorant men? I say obscure and ignorant with regard to the times in which they lived; for the question is a relative one. The thing is, to see, not whether these writers were as enlightened as we could desire legislators to be, but whether they had more or less knowledge than those who at first applied the laws according to their own judgment, or even, in great measure, enacted them. And who has always been found the most ferocious—the man who labours at theories and discusses them before the public, or the man who exercises his arbitrary will in private upon one who resists him?

Now, with regard to Verri's remarks, it would, indeed, be a misfortune, if the solution of the first question, "from whence proceeds the right of punishing crimes," were necessary to the wise compilation of penal statutes; in the time of Verri, people might possibly imagine it solved; but now (and fortunately, for it is better to struggle in doubt, than to repose in

error,) there is a greater controversy about it than ever. And the other questions, I say, all the others of a more immediate and practical importance, were they perhaps solved, and solved as they ought to be? had they at least been discussed and examined when these writers appeared? Perhaps they came to confound an established order of things, founded upon the most just and humane principles; to overthrow wiser doctrines, to disturb a more reasonable jurisprudence? To this we ourselves can frankly answer, no; and that is sufficient for our present business. but we should like some one of those men who have studied the subject, to examine whether it were not rather these men, who were constrained to render account of their decisions, precisely because they were private individuals, and not legislators, who reduced the subject to general principles, collecting and classifying such as were scattered through the Roman law, and seeking others in the universal idea of right: whether it was not they who, labouring to construct with old fragments and new materials one entire criminal code, prepared the first idea, indicated the possibility, and, in part, the order of an entire system of criminal legislature; and whether, imagining a general model, it was not they who opened the path to other writers—by whom they have been too summarily judged—and taught them to dream of a general reform?

Finally, with regard to the accusation so general and so devoid of proof, that they have refined upon the tortures, we have already seen that torture was expressly denounced, and, as far as lay in their power, prohibited by them. Many of the passages to which

we have referred may in part serve to wash from them the stain of having treated this subject with impassible tranquillity. Permit me to adduce another passage, which almost appears an anticipated protestation. "One cannot help becoming excessively—*non possum nisi vehementer excandescere*—enraged against those judges who keep the criminal for a long time bound before putting him to the torture, rendering by this preparation the agony still more cruel."*

From these testimonials, and from what we know to have been the state of torture during the latter part of its reign, we can infer with considerable certainty, that these interpreters of the criminal law left it in a much less barbarous state than they had found it in. Assuredly it would be absurd to attribute to one single cause such a diminution of evil; but among the great number of those causes which may have contributed to this diminution, it would be equally unreasonable to take no account of the reproofs and admonitions, publicly expressed and renewed from century to century, by those to whom was attributed a certain real authority over the proceedings of the tribunals.

Verri then quotes some of their propositions; these would not suffice to found a general historical judgment upon, even were they all quoted with exactness. Here, for example, is a very important one which is not: "Claro asserts, that some suspicion of a man's guilt suffices to bring him to the torture."

If this doctor had spoken thus, it would have been rather a singularity than an argument; so opposed is this doctrine to that held by a multitude of other

* Quest. xxxviii. 38.

learned men. I do not say by *all*, not wishing to assert more than I know, although in asserting as much I should not fear to say more than the truth. But in reality, Claro himself says the contrary; and it is probable that Verri was led into this error through the negligence of a typographer, who has printed, "*Nec sufficit adesse aliqua indicia contra reum ad hoc ut torqueri possit,*" instead of "*Non sufficit,*" as may be found in two later editions.* And to assure oneself of this error it is not necessary even to compare the passages, since the text continues after this manner: "if these evidences of guilt are not lawfully proved." a phrase which would certainly be opposed to the preceding one, if that have an affirmative sense. And immediately afterwards, "I have said that it is not enough to have merely evidence of guilt, or that this evidence should be lawfully proved, if it is not sufficient to authorise torture. Not unjustly to condemn any one to the torture, is a thing which judges who live in fear of God, should always have before their eyes; it is a thing which subjects themselves to a judgment in revision." And he also relates how Afflitto replied to King Frederick, "that not even he, with the royal authority, could command a judge to put a man to torture against whom there were not proofs sufficient."

Thus speaks Claro; and this is enough to convince us that he must intend something else than rendering arbitrary will absolute by this other maxim, which Verri translated in the following manner: "in matters of torture and of proof, as it is impossible to prescribe

* Ven. apud Hier. Polum, 1580, f. 172—*Ibid.* apud P. Ugolinum, 1595, f. 180.

any fixed rule, all is referred to the will of the judge.”* This contradiction would be too strange; and it would be still more so, if possible, when we consider what the same author says elsewhere: “although the judge has the power of exercising his will, he must, nevertheless, keep to the common law; and the officers of justice must be careful that their ardour carry them not away under this pretext of free will.”†

What, therefore, is to be understood by the words “*remittitur arbitrio judicis*,” which Verri translates, “all is referred to the will of the judge!”

He means—but what say I? wherefore seek in this an opinion peculiar to Claro? He does no more than repeat a maxim which had, so to say, already become proverbial by means of the law interpreters. Two centuries previous Bartolo also repeats it, as a general opinion: “*Doctores communiter dicunt quod in hoc—these are the proofs which authorise torture—non potest dari certa doctrina, sed relinquitur arbitrio judicis.*”‡ And by these words he does not intend to propound a principle or to establish a theory, but simply to declare a fact; that the law not having determined the proofs, has by that very means left them to the free decision of the judge. Guido da Suzara, nearly a century before Bartolo, having also said and repeated that the proofs are referred to the will of the judge, adds, “as in general is every thing which is not determined by the law.”§ And to cite some less ancient names, Paride dal Pozzo repeating

* Verri, *loc. cit.*—Claro, *loc. cit.* 13.

† *Ibid.* Quæst. xxxi. 9.

‡ Bart, *ad Dig.* lib. xlviii. tit. xviii. c. 22.

§ *Et generaliter omne quod non determinatur a jure, relinquitur arbitrio indecantis* (*De Tormentis*, 30).

this common observation, thus comments upon it:—
 “The religion of the judge ought to supply all that remains undetermined, either by the law or usage: therefore this law regarding evidence, reposes a responsibility upon him.* And Bossi, a writer upon criminal law of the sixteenth century, and a senator of Milan, says, “The arbitrary will of the judge merely consists (*in hoc consistit*) in this, that the judge finds no positive rule in the law which says he shall not commence with torture, but with likely and probable arguments. It therefore concerns the judge to examine whether a proof is likely and probable.”

What they call arbitrary will was merely the same thing, which later, to avoid this equivocal and lugubrious word, was called *discretionary power*, a dangerous yet inevitable thing, in the application of both good and bad laws, and which wise legislators endeavoured not to remove, for that would be a chimera; but to limit to certain determined and less essential cases and endeavour even in these cases to restrain as much as they are able.

And such was, I feel confident in saying, the first intention, and the progressive labour of the interpreters, expressly with regard to torture, the power over which intrusted by law to the judges was frightfully great. Bartolo, after those words which we have given above, continues: “but I will give such rules as I am able to give.” Other writers previous to him had given rules; and his successors gave gradually many more—some proposing rules of their own.

* *Et ideo lex super indiciis gravat conscientias indicum.* (*De syndacatu, in verbo—Mandavit, 182.*)

† *Ægid. Bossii, Tractatus varii, tit. de indiciis ante torturum, 32.*

others repeating or confirming those of their predecessors; without, however, omitting to repeat the formula which expressed the object of the law, of which, after all, they were merely the interpreters.

Through the progress of time and the advancement of their labour, they desired also to modify the language; and in proof of this we have Farinacci, who succeeded those writers whom we have already quoted, but who preceded the epoch of our trial, and who was then considered of very high authority. After having repeated and confirmed by a deluge of authorities, the principle that "Free will of the judges ought not to be understood as absolute, but as connected with right and equity;" after having deduced and confirmed by other authorities this consequence, that "the judge ought always to incline to the mildest measures, and regulate his free will by the general disposition of the law, and the doctrine of the most approved writers, and not to create evidence according to his own caprice;" and after having treated upon the nature of this evidence at a greater length, I believe, and with more order than any other writer had yet done, he concludes: "It is then evident that the common maxim of the doctors—that the proofs which authorise the employment of torture are left to the discretion of the judge—has been so unanimously limited by these doctors themselves, that many lawyers say, with reason, that this very maxim ought to establish the contrary rule—that these proofs are not left to the discretion of the judge." And he quotes this sentence from Francesco Casoni: "It is a common error among judges to suppose that torture is arbitrary, as though nature had created the

bodies of criminals to be tortured according to the caprice."*

We see here a remarkable moment in the history of the science; she measures her labour, and requires the fruits; and proclaiming herself, not the declarer, but the reformer (for such she never pretended to be, neither would she have been admitted as such), but as an efficacious auxiliary of the law, and consecrating her own authority with authority derived from a superior and eternal law, she commands judges to follow the rules which she has discovered, and thus spare men who may be innocent, these sufferings, and themselves the most shameful deeds of iniquity. Sorrowful corrections of a thing which from its essence could never receive a good form; but which are far from being suitable arguments to prove Verri's thesis: "That neither were the horrors of torture confined to the torments it inflicted—but that the doctors created fresh horrors by their manner of applying it."

Allow us finally to make a few observations regarding another passage, quoted by the same author; and examine them all, would take up too much space and certainly would not forward the question. One single horror will suffice for all; and this is related by the celebrated Claro, a Milanese, who is the great master in this practice. "A judge (says he) having in prison a woman suspected of some crime, can secretly send for her into his chamber; there caress her, feign to love her, and promise to liberate her, in order to induce the miserable being to accuse herself of the crime; and by such means a certain administrator induced a young girl to declare herself guilty of a

* Francisci Casoni: *Tractatus de Tormentis*, cap. I.

murder, and thus caused her to lose her head. And lest any one suspect that these horrible deeds, so opposed to religion, virtue, and all the principles most sacred to humanity, are exaggerated—see, here is what Claro himself says: ‘*Paris dicit quod judex potest, etc.*’ ”

A horror, in truth; but to see of what importance it may be in a question of this kind, we must observe that declaring this opinion, Paride dal Pozzo,* does not give it as a discovery of his; he relates—and, alas! with approbation—the action of a judge, that is, one of the thousand deeds produced by this arbitrary will, without any suggestion from the doctors. We must observe also that Baiardi, who relates this opinion in his additions to Claro (not Claro himself), does so to curse it, and to qualify this act of diabolical fiction; and that he quotes no other author who holds such an opinion from the time of Paride dal Pozzo, until his own, that is, during the space of a century. And advancing towards our own times, it would be strange, were there any. God preserve us from calling this Paride dal Pozzo, with Giannone, “the excellent lawyer,”† but the other words of his which we have already quoted, would suffice to shew that these brutal ones can scarcely give a just idea of the doctrines even of their writer.

Certainly we have not the strange intention to demonstrate that the doctrines of the interpreters taken as a whole, have never served, or been perverted to evil purposes. This is a question of extreme interest; we have to pass judgment upon the effect

* Paridis de Puteo, *De syndicatu in verbo: Et advertendum est; Judex debet esse subtilis in investiganda maleficii veritate.*

† *Istoria civile, etc.*, lib. 28, cap. ult.

and intention of the intellectual labour of many centuries, regarding a thing as important as it is necessary to humanity; a question belonging also to our time, since, as we have already observed, and as every one knows, the moment in which man labours to overthrow a system, is not the most favourable in which impartially to write its history; but it is a question which must be solved, or rather it is a history which must be written, with other than few and disconnected words. What has already been said, even if I do not deceive myself, suffice to shew how has been the conclusion of men; and these few details have been, to a certain degree, a necessary introduction to our narrative. We shall have only too often throughout our little history, to deplore that the authority of these men was not in truth more efficacious; and yet we are certain that our readers will exclaim with us; "would that they had only been obeyed!"

CHAPTER III.

To come finally to the application of our remarks, it was generally and almost universally taught by the doctors, that the lies uttered by the accused when replying to the judge were, to use their language, legitimate evidence which authorised the application of torture. This was the reason, therefore, that the magistrate who examined the unfortunate Piazza declared it was improbable that he should not have heard of the walls which had been daubed in the neighbourhood of the *Porta Ticinese*, and should not know the names of the deputies with whom he had had business.

But these doctors teach, perhaps, that any kind of lie will suffice?

“The lie, to authorise torture, must regard the quality and principal circumstances of the crime, that is those circumstances which appertain to it, or from which the crime may be inferred; otherwise not: (*alias secus*).

“The lie shall not authorise torture if it concern things which would not increase the guilt of the criminal, even if he confessed them.”

According to these doctors, a man may be brought to torture because his words appear to the judge lies?

“The lie to authorise torture must be proved in a conclusive manner, or by the confession of the criminal himself, or by two witnesses—it being a general

doctrine that two are necessary to prove real evidence, which a lie most certainly is.* I quote, and shall often quote, Farinacci as one of the highest authorities, and as a great compiler of the received opinions of his day. Some judges, however, contented themselves with a single witness, provided that the evidence agreed on all points. But that the lie should result from legal proof, and not from the simple conjecture of the judge, was a general doctrine which remained uncontroverted.

These conditions were deduced from that text in the Roman law which prohibited (what things people are obliged to prohibit when they have admitted certain others!) the judges from commencing with torture. "And were we to concede to the judges," says the same author, "the power of putting criminals to the torture without lawful and sufficient evidence, it would be the same as if they possessed the power of commencing with it. And to be lawful, these proofs must be possible, probable, neither light nor of mere formality: but grave, urgent, certain, clear—nay, even clearer than the sun at noonday, as one says familiarly. The object is, subjecting a man to torture, to a torture which may decide his life (*agitur de hominis salute*): and therefore do not marvel, O rigorous judge, if the science of law and the doctors require such exquisitely correct evidence, and repeat their commands in such strong language and so often."†

We shall certainly not say that all this is reasonable, since what implies contradictions cannot be reasonable. These were vain endeavours to conciliate certainty

* *Praxis et Theorica criminalis*, quest. lii. 11, 13.

† *Ibid.*, quest. xxvii. 2, 3, 4.

with doubts, to avoid the danger of subjecting innocent individuals to torture, and of extorting false confessions; at the same time, however, desiring torture as a means by which to discover whether the accused be guilty or innocent, and by which to make him confess whatever his judges desired.

The logical inference would have been, to declare torture an absurd and unjust thing; but the blind worship of antiquity and the Roman law prevented this. The little work, "Crimes and Punishments," which promoted, not only the abolition of torture, but the reform in the entire system of criminal legislature, commences with these words: "Some fragments of the laws of an ancient nation of conquerors." This commencement appears what it really is, words inspired by the boldness of a great mind; a century earlier it would have appeared extravagant. But neither is there here any cause of astonishment; did we ever see a worship of the same description which existed for a longer space of time, which became stronger in politics, or which more tardily resigned its influence in literature and the fine arts? But the moment arrives in great things as well as in small, when that which is accidental or artificial, wishing to perpetuate itself as natural and necessary, is constrained to yield to experience, to reason, to satiety, to the mode, or, if possible, to something even more insignificant, according to the quality and importance of the object itself; but this moment must be brought about. And it is no small merit of the interpreters if, as seems to be the case, it was they who prepared this moment, although by slow degrees, and without being themselves aware of it.

But the very rules which they have established are enough to convict the judges, in the present instance, of positive prevarication. These judges wished to commence with torture. Without entering into any consideration concerning the circumstances, either substantial or accidental, of the presumed crime, they multiplied inconclusive questions, so as to create some pretext for saying to the destined victim: "It is not probable," and then regarding these pretended improbabilities as legally proved, they ordered torture. The fact is that they did not seek after the truth, but desired a confession: not knowing what advantage they would have over him in the examination of the supposed crime, they longed to apply the torture, which would give them a ready and certain advantage; they were in a perfect frenzy for it. At Milan (this is the expression employed in similar cases) knew that Guglielmo Piazza had anointed the walls, the doors, and the entrances in the street of *Vedra*,—and yet to think, that they who had him in their power should be unable immediately to extract this confession from him!

Will it be said that jurisprudence, if not conscience justifies every thing by the detestable maxim which was then generally received, that in the most horrible crimes, the judge is permitted to exceed the law? We forget that the general, nay, almost universal opinion of the lawyers was, that such a maxim could not be applied to the proceedings, but only to the punishment; "because," to quote one of them, "although the prisoner may be tried for an enormous crime, it does not necessarily follow that he has committed it; and as long as it does not appear that he

has committed the crime, your duty is to preserve the glory of justice.” *

And to perpetuate the memory of one of those notable instances, in which reason manifests itself in all ages, we will also quote the remark of a man who wrote about the beginning of the fifteenth century, and who was long afterwards still called the Bartolo of ecclesiastical law, Nicolo Tedeschi, archbishop of Palermo, better known so long as he was known, as the Abbot of Palermo. “The graver is the crime,” says this excellent man, “the stronger ought to be the evidence; for where the danger is greater, it is necessary to proceed with more prudence.” But this is not applicable to our case, for Claro assures us that in the courts of justice at Milan, the contrary custom prevailed, that is to say, that in cases such as the present, the judges were permitted to overstep the law even in the examination.† ‘A rule,’ remarks Riminaldi, another celebrated lawyer, ‘which has not been admitted in other countries;’ and Farinacci adds: ‘he is right.’‡ But let us see how Claro himself interprets such a rule; ‘torture is applied, although the evidence is not entirely sufficient (*in totum sufficientia*), although it is not proved by two witnesses, and often without the criminal having received a copy of the proceedings of the trial.’ And when he treats in particular of those proofs which authorise torture, he expressly declares them necessary, “not only in minor crimes, but also in the greatest and most atrocious,

* P. Follerii, *Pract. Crim. Cap. Quod. suffocavit*, 52.

† Clar. Sent. Rec., lib. v.

‡ Hipp. Riminaldi, *Consilia*; lxxxviii. 53.—Farin. *Quest.* xxxvii.

even in the crime of high-treason itself." * That he contented himself with evidence less carefully taken but he wished it to be tested in some way; with witnesses of a less authority, but he wished to have witnesses; with weaker proofs, but they must be proofs, relating to the fact; in short, he wished to render the discovery of crime easier to the judge without giving him the power of tormenting, under any pretext, those victims who might fall into his hands. These are things which an abstract theorist does not receive, does not invent, does not dream of, yet, certainly passion does!

The wicked magistrate then intimated to Piazzi "that he should say truly, wherefore he had denied all knowledge of the walls having been anointed, and wherefore he had denied all knowledge of the deputies' names, otherwise the thing being improbable, he would be placed on the rack, that by this means they might obtain the truth of the improbabilities." "If your lordships desire to fasten the cord to my neck do so, for I know nothing regarding the things you ask me of," replied the unfortunate man, with that species of desperate courage, with which reason sometimes defies power, as if to shew that whatever advantage power may gain, it can at least never become reason.

And only see to what a miserable piece of cunning these signors have recourse in order to give a little more colouring to their pretext! They went in search of a second lie, so as to employ the plural formula: they sought another cipher, to increase an account in which they had not as yet placed a single number.

* Clar. *Ibid.* lib. v.

He is put to the torture; he is told "that he must make up his mind to speak the truth;" he replies, amidst cries, groans, prayers, and supplications, "I have told it you, my lord." They insist. "Ah, for the love of God!" cried the unhappy man, "let your lordship command me to be let down and I will tell you all that I know; let me have a little water given me." He is let down, placed on a seat, and questioned anew; he replies, "I know nothing; let your lordship order me a little water."

How blind is passion! It never once occurred to these judges that what they desired to force from his lips, he might have invoked as the strongest proof of his innocence, if it had been true, as they with a horrible assurance insisted was the fact. "Yes, my lord," he might have replied, "I have heard that the walls in the *via della Vedra* were found anointed, and I was merely standing to amuse myself at the door of your house, Signor President of the Tribunal!" And the argument would have appeared all the more irresistible, as the report of the deed, and the report of Piazza being its perpetrator, having spread together, the poor man would at the same time have heard the news and learned his own danger. But this simple observation, which passion prevented from occurring to the judges, could not even occur to the unfortunate victim, because he had never been informed of what thing he was accused. They wished at first to conquer him by tortures, these agonies they considered the probable and possible arguments required by the law; they wished to make him feel the immediate and terrible consequence of answering 'No' to them; they wished to make him once confess himself *a liar*,

in order that they might acquire the right of believing him when he should say, 'I am innocent.' But they did not obtain their wicked desire. He is again subjected to the torture, raised from the ground; he is told that he will be raised again; the threat is executed; he is still pressed to "declare the truth," and always replies, "I have spoken the truth," at first shouting the words, and afterwards repeating them in a low voice. At length the judges seeing that he can no longer reply in any manner, ordering him to be let down, and he is re-conducted to prison.

This examination being reported to the senate on the 23d instant, by the President of the Tribunal who was one of its members, and by the Minister of Justice, who had a seat in the senate whenever he was summoned thither. It was decreed by this supreme tribunal that Piazza, after having been shaved, clothed in the dress of the prison and purged, should be put to the torture extraordinary, with binding of the limbs, "a horrible increase of torture, by which not only the arms, but the hands were dislocated. This should be repeated according to the will of the two above-named magistrates, and this after such lies and improbabilities as shall result from the trial."

The senate alone had, I do not say the authority, but the power of pursuing with impunity such a course. The Roman law, regarding the repetition of torture,* was interpreted in two ways, and the one that was most probably the least correct was the most humane. Many doctors—following, perhaps, Ode-

* *Reus evidentioribus argumentis oppressus, repeti in questionem potest* (Dig. lib. vi. viii. tit. 18, l. 18.)

fredo,* who is the only one quoted by Cino di Pistoia,† and the most ancient authority quoted by the others—insist that torture can only be repeated upon fresh proofs being brought forward stronger than the first; an expression which was later adopted, but in a different sense. Many others, following Bartolo,‡ insist that the torture may be repeated, if the first proofs are very clear and decided, which maxim was also adopted when the torture had been slight.§ But neither of these interpretations is applicable to the present case. No fresh evidence had been brought forward; and the former evidence was merely that two women had seen Piazza touch a wall, and that certain magistrates had seen “some signs of unctuous matter” upon blackened and smoked walls, especially in a passage—into which Piazza had never entered. And more than that, these proofs, so evident, so important, so satisfactory, as every one sees, had never been tested, had never been discussed with the criminal. But what do I say? the decree issued by the senate does not even mention evidence relative to the crime, it does not even misapply the law, it proceeds as though there were none. Contrary to every law, contrary to every authority, contrary to all reason, it orders that Piazza shall be again tortured, on account of certain lies and improbabilities; in other words, the senate orders its delegates to recommence, and with greater cruelty, that which it ought, on the con-

* *Numquid potest repeti quæstio? videtur quod sic; ut Dig. col. Repeti. Sed vos dicatis quod non potest repeti sine novis indiciis.* (Odo-fredi, ad Cod. lib. ix. tit. 41, l. 18.)

† Cyni Pistoriensis, *super. Cod. lib. ix. tit. 41. l. de Tormentis*, 8.

‡ Bart. *ad Dig. loc. cit.*

§ V. Farinac, *Quæst. xxxviii. 72, et seq.*

trary, to have punished them for having already done so since it was—and should it not be so?—the universal doctrine, a maxim in jurisprudence, that whoever shall have put a criminal to the torture without legal authority, shall be punished by his superior.

But the senate of Milan was the supreme tribunal (in this world we mean, of course), and the senate of Milan, from which the people expected vengeance if not salvation, ought not to be less adroit, less precise, less severing, less fortunate in discovering crime than Catarina Rosa. All proceedings were taken by the authority of this woman; her words, “it came into my mind whether he might not be one of those,” as they had been the first occasion of the trial, were now the rule and model. The only difference between Catarina and the judges was, that she had commenced with doubt, they with certainty. We ought not to be astonished at seeing a whole tribunal following and emulating the example of two ignorant women; and when once men have entered the path of passion, it is natural that the most blind should lead the way. But it does appear strange to see men who ought to be, and who certainly do not belong to those who desire evil through their evil natures, violate so openly and so cruelly every species of justice; yet an unjust belief leads to unjust modes of action; and if the conscience hesitate, or trouble itself, the cries of the public have the melancholy power—over those who forget that they have another Judge—of suffocating remorse, nay, even of preventing its existence.

The motive of these odious, if not cruel commands to shave, re-clothe, and purge the unhappy victim, we will give in the words of Verri:—“In those times”

was imagined that in the hair, in the clothes, or even in the intestines, an amulet or compact with the devil might be concealed, of which the criminal might be deprived by shaving, re-clothing, and purging him."

This second examination was only a repetition of the former one, equally absurd and more atrocious, and produced no other result. The unhappy Piazza, questioned at first, and afterwards contradicted in a manner which might be called puerile, if such a word could be applied to such a thing, always regarding circumstances which were of no importance to the supposed crime, without the nature of this crime ever having been made known to him, was subjected to this still more cruel torture which had been prescribed by the senate. They drew from his lips words of grief and despair, and words of bitter supplication, but none of those words which they so ardently desired, and to obtain which they had the courage to hear and to call forth these cries of agony. "Ah, my God! ah, what assassination is this! Ah, my lord attorney! Let me at least be fastened quickly. Let my hand be cut off—kill me! let me at least rest a little. Ah, Signor President; for the love of God give me something to drink!" together with, "I know nothing, I have spoken the truth." After many similar replies, and this coldly and madly repeated injunction "to speak the truth," the poor man lost his voice and remained mute; four times pressed to reply, he remained silent; at length he was able to say once more, with a weak voice, "I know nothing; the truth I have already spoken." They were now forced to conclude, and again he was reconducted to prison without having confessed anything.

There was now no longer either pretext or reason for recommencing the torture; the path which they had chosen as the shortest, had conducted them to the end of the highway. If the torture produced its effect and extorted the confession of a lie, they kept the victim; and horrible to relate! the more unimportant the object of the lie had been in itself, the greater would they have considered it of Piazza's guilt in shewing that he desired to keep far from the reality and appear ignorant of every thing; in short, that he desired—to lie. But, after having subjected a man twice to illegal torture, to subject him a third time because he had not heard speak of a certain fact, would, indeed, have exceeded the limits of the extraordinary. They had therefore to begin again, just as though they had done nothing; they were obliged to come to the investigation of the supposed crime, to inform Piazza of the accusation, and interrogate him. And, if he deny again? If he should continue to deny even in the midst of torments? Torments which ought inevitably to be the last, if the judges did not wish to appropriate to themselves a terrible sentence pronounced by one of their body, dead almost a century before, but whose authority was still as strong as ever, we mean the words of Bossi, which we have already quoted. "I have never seen," says he, "torture commanded more than three times, unless it were by executioners rather than judges." And yet he speaks of torture legally commanded!

But passion is only too skilful and bold in finding fresh paths by which to escape the path of the law, when that is long and uncertain. Having commenced

With torture of the limbs, they now adopted a torture of another description. By order of the Senate (as we learn from an authentic letter from the Minister of Justice to the Governor Spinola, who was then at the siege of Casale), the Attorney-general of the Tribunal, in presence of a notary, promised Piazza impunity, upon condition that he would speak the entire truth. They had imagined this means of speaking to him of the accusation without being obliged to discuss it with him; they would speak with him on the subject, not to draw from his replies, information necessary for the investigation of the truth, not to hear what he himself could say about the affair, but to powerfully stimulate him to say what they desired he should say.

This letter, of which we have spoken, was written on the 28th of June, when the trial, through this expedient, had made a considerable advance. "I have judged it right to inform your Excellency," commences the letter, "of all that has been discovered relative to those scoundrels who, within the last few days, have anointed the walls and gates of this city." And it will be neither uninteresting nor unprofitable to hear how such things are spoken of by those who did them. "The Senate," continues the letter, "has commissioned me to institute prosecutions against a certain Guglielmo Piazza, a man of humble birth, but at the present time a Commissioner of the Tribunal of Health; who, by certain women and by a man of credit, is charged with having, on Friday the 21st instant, early in the morning, anointed certain walls in a street near the *Porta Ticinese*, called the *Vedra de Cittadini*."

And this man of credit, who is suddenly brought forward to corroborate the statements of the women, had merely related that he had met Piazza whom "I saluted," says he, "and who returned my salutation," and this unhappy man is convicted though the crime of which they accused him was having entered the *Via della Vedita*! The Minister of Justice does not say a single word regarding the visit he paid to that quarter of the city to discover evidence of the crime, neither is this visit even referred to throughout the whole course of the trial.

"He was immediately taken up," continues the Minister of Justice, but he makes no mention of the search made in the house, "where was found, nothing suspicious."

"And having convicted himself greatly in examination"—one has seen in what manner!—"he was subjected to severe torture, but did not confess his guilt."

If any one had said to Spinola, that Piazza had never in the least been questioned regarding the crime, Spinola would not have failed to reply, "I am positively informed to the contrary. The Minister of Justice does not precisely write me word that he has been questioned, that would have been useful but he informs me of something else, by which that may be understood, and which necessarily supposes it. He writes me word, that the criminal having been put to the severe torture, did not confess." If the other had still insisted—How!—would have exclaimed this celebrated and powerful man—do you believe that the Minister of Justice would have so far made sport of the Governor as to relate to him as an important

piece of news, that something which ought to have been done, has not been done in reality? And, nevertheless, such was the case: not that the Minister of Justice had wished to make sport of the Governor, only something had been done, the manner of doing which could not be precisely related: thus does a false conscience always discover with much greater ease, pretexts for action than words in which to relate those actions when they are done.

But with regard to the impunity which was offered to Piazza, there is in this letter another artifice, which Spinola could, nay, ought to have discovered by himself, at least in part, had he thought of anything beyond the taking of Casale, which he did not take. "By order of the Senate," continues the letter, "and in execution of the edict relative to this affair, recently issued by your Excellency, the President of the Senate having promised impunity to this man, he finally confessed," etc.

In the thirty-first chapter of the *Betrothed*, mention is made of an edict, issued by the Tribunal of Health, promising reward and impunity to any one who should reveal the authors of the stains found on the walls and doors of the houses, on the morning of the 18th of May, and a letter from the Tribunal to the Governor, relative to this fact, is also referred to. In this letter, after having declared that the edict had been proclaimed, "with full consent of the Lord High-Chancellor, who for the time filled the office of Governor, they besought Spinola, "to corroborate this edict by another one, and by a promise of a greater reward." And the Governor did in reality issue another, dated the 13th of June, in which "is pro-

mised to any person who, within the term of thirty days, will bring to light the person or persons who have committed, aided or abetted, this crime, the reward, etc.; and if this said person be one of the criminals, impunity also." And it is by authority of this edict, so expressly relating to the deed of the 18th of May, that the Minister of Justice says he has promised impunity to the man accused of the deed of the 21st of June, and writes this to the very man, who, if he had done nothing else, had at least signed the edict.* So much did they, it seems, count upon the siege of Casale; for it would be too strange to suppose that both parties could have overlooked this little circumstance.

But what necessity was there to employ this subterfuge with Spinola? The necessity to avail themselves of his authority, so as to disguise an irregular and illegal act, both according to jurisprudence and according to the laws of the country. It was the general doctrine that the judge could not by his own authority concede impunity to the accused. And in the statutes of Charles V., which bestow the most ample power upon the Senate, it is, however, expressly stated, "that the power to grant remission of crime, pardons, or safeconduct, was reserved to the prince."† And Bossi, who as Senator of Milan was one of the compilers of these statutes, says, "this power of promising impunity belongs to the Prince alone."‡

But wherefore be obliged to employ such a subterfuge, when it was possible to apply to the Governor,

* V. Farinacci, *Quæst.* lxxx. 277.

† *Constitutiones domini mediolanensis, de Senatoribus.*

‡ *Op. cit. tit. de Confessis per Torturam.*

who without doubt had received such authority from the Prince, with the power of transmitting it? This is not a possibility which we have ourselves imagined; it is what these magistrates themselves did on account of another unfortunate wretch who was later involved in this cruel trial. This act is registered in the trial itself in the following terms: "Ambrosio Spinola, etc. etc. In conformity to the advice given you by the Senate, in the letter of the 5th instant, and by virtue of the present, grant impunity to Stefano Barnello, condemned as dispenser and fabricator of poisonous ointments, dispersed through this city for the destruction of its people, if within the time agreed by the Senate he shall denounce the authors of the crime, his accomplices."

Impunity was never promised Piazza by a formal and authentic act. It was simply the Attorney-general who spoke to him of it, and that without reference to the trial. And this was very well understood by them: such an act would have been too evident a falsehood, had it openly claimed its authority from the edict; had it claimed authority from nothing, it would have been an usurpation of power. But wherefore, I add, remove from themselves, in a certain way, the possibility of solemnly executing an act of such importance?

It is impossible for us to find replies to all these *wherefores*, but later we shall see of what use this mode of action was to the judges.

At all events, the irregularity of such proceedings was so manifest, that Padilla's advocate freely notices it. Although he declares with great reason, that to vindicate his client from this false accusation, he should have no need to seek for further evidence than

that which directly concerns him; although, with some incoherence, he attests the existence of a real crime and real criminal, amidst a mass of imaginations and inventions; and, standing which, to weaken as much as possible relative to this accusation. He makes various citations in various passages in the trial relating to the suspected criminals. And concerning the offer of impunity, without impugning the authority of the Senate in this matter for at all times men are more offended at their power than at their rectitude is questioned. objects that Piazza was brought before this said judge, who had no jurisdiction, therefore proceeded without power and against the law. And speaking of the mention which is made of this offer of impunity, he says, "And until this point, one neither perceives nor reads in the trial of this impunity, which nevertheless ought to be so evident."

In this passage of the defence there is a word which, as it were accidentally, yet full of a most significant sense. In referring to the acts which preceded the offer of impunity, the advocate makes no direct allusion to the torture to which Piazza was subjected but speaks of it thus: "Under pretext of his spoken improbabilities, he was tortured." And it seems to me a circumstance worthy of remark, that the thing should be then spoken of by its proper name, even in the presence of those who were the authors, and by an individual who did not at least intend to defend the cause of him who had fallen its victim.

It is necessary to say that this promise of im-

is little known to the public since Ripamonti, relating the principal facts of this trial in his History of the Plague, makes no mention of it, even if he does not directly exclude it. This writer, who was incapable of having wilfully altered the truth, but who is excusable for not reading either Padilla's defence,

the extract from the trial which accompanies this defence, and for having rather believed the public gossip, or the lies of some interested party, relates, on the contrary, that immediately after the torture, and whilst he was being unbound to be conducted back to prison, he made a spontaneous revelation, which was a surprise to every one.* This false revelation did not certainly take place, but only the following day, after an interview with the judge, and to people who fully expected it; so that had not these few documents remained, and had the proceedings of the Senate merely been registered by history and the public, the judges would have succeeded in throwing obscurity over this fact, so essential to the trial—a fact which influences all succeeding events.

What really passed at this interview no one knows, yet every one can pretty well imagine. "It is very probable," says Verri, "that even in prison, this unfortunate man was led to infer that if he persisted in denying, every day the torture would be re-administered, that the judges believed in the crime, and that no other expedient now remained for him, but to accuse himself and name his accomplices, and that by this means he would save his life, and would be delivered from the torture which otherwise would be renewed each day. Piazza therefore demanded

* De Peste, p. 84.

and received impunity, upon condition that he could not reveal the whole affair."

It does not, however, appear very probable, that Piazza should himself have besought impunity. This miserable man, as we shall see in the sequel, moved forward only when he was dragged along; and therefore it is far more credible, that in order to induce him to take this first, most strange, and horrible step, that of calumniating himself and others, the judges should have offered him impunity. And moreover the judges, when speaking of this later, would not have omitted so important a circumstance, a circumstance which would have given so much more weight to the confession; neither would the Minister of Justice have omitted it in his letter to Spinola.

But who can imagine the struggles of this soul, which the memory of the recent tortures doubtless filled, now with fear of personal suffering, now with the fear of causing suffering to others! in which the hope of escaping a frightful death presented itself only with the terror of causing death to some innocent being; since it was not to be believed that these judges would abandon one victim without at least having gained another, or that these judges would be satisfied without a condemnation. He yielded, he embraced this horrible and uncertain hope; he took upon himself this engagement, monstrous and difficult as it was; he resolved to place a victim in his stead. But how to find this victim? What clue to guide himself by? How to choose, where there was no one to choose from? It was a real fact which had served as pretext for his accusation. He had entered the *Via della Vedra*; he had walked along the wall. . .

had touched it; an unlucky woman had seen something imperfectly, but still she had seen something.

A fact not less innocent, not less insignificant suggested to Piazza, both the person and the fable.

The barber Giangiacomo Mora compounded and sold a certain ointment as a specific against the plague; one of the thousand specifics which the public regarded, and were likely to regard with faith, whilst a disease for which no one knew the remedy was making such fearful ravages, and in an age when the science of medicine had made so little progress. A few days previous to the arrest, Piazza had asked the Barber for some of this ointment; Mora had promised to prepare him some; and having encountered Piazza in the *Carrobio* on the morning of the day of the arrest, had told Piazza that the little vase of ointment was ready, and that he might come to fetch it. The judges desired from Piazza a history of ointments, of conspiracies, of the *Via della Vedra*: these recent circumstances served him as materials from which to compose a history; that is, if connecting many real circumstances with an invention utterly incompatible, may be called composing.

The following day, June the 26th, Piazza is conducted before his examiners, and the judge commands him to say, "as he had confessed to him extrajudicially, and in presence of the notary Balbiano, whether he knew who had made these ointments with which, at various times, the doors, walls, and even locks of the houses in this city had been anointed."

The unhappy man, who, lying in spite of himself, sought how he could least swerve from the truth, merely replied, "The Barber gave me the ointment."

These are the words literally translated, but which are thus misplaced by Ripamonti, "*dedit unguentum mihi tonsor.*"

He is ordered "to name this said Barber;" and the accomplice, the minister in such a plot, replies, "I believe his name is Gio, Giacomo; his paternal name (his surname) I do not know." The only thing at which he was certain, was where the Barber's house was situated, or rather his shop; and in another examination he told this.

They demand, "whether the said Barber had given much or little of this ointment to him, the accused?" He replies, "He gave me about as much as would fill that inkstand upon the table." If he had received the little vase of the preservative for which he had asked, he would most certainly have described it, but being unable to describe anything from memory, he employed an object that was present. They demand, "whether the said Barber is a friend of his?" And here, not perceiving how the truth which presents itself is opposed to the invention, he replies, "He is my friend; yes, my lord, we wish each other good day; he is my friend; yes, my lord." That is to say, that he scarcely knew him sufficiently well to salute him.

But his examiners, without making any observation, continue to demand, "Upon what occasion the said Barber had given him the ointment?" And this is what he replies — "I was passing by, when he called to me, saying, 'I have something here to give you.' I asked him what it was? and he said, 'It is some ointment.' I said to him: yes, yes, I will come then and fetch it; two or three days later he gave it me." He changed the material circumstances of the fact,

much as was necessary to accommodate the fable ; but he left the original colouring, and probably some of the words which he reports were in reality what had passed between them. Words spoken regarding an agreement made about a specific, he assigns as having been spoken with intention to propose a scheme by which to poison the city—a scheme not less extravagant than horrible.

The judges still continue their questions concerning the place, the day, and the hour of the proposal and delivery; and, as if satisfied with these replies, they pass on to others. “What did the Barber say, when he delivered the said vase of ointment?”

“He said; take this vase of ointment, and anoint the walls round about here, then come to me, and you shall have a handful of money.”

“But wherefore did not the Barber, without risking anything, anoint the walls himself during the night?” remarks—‘I was going to say,’ exclaims Verri. And this improbability involves the unhappy man in a new series of replies. Interrogated—“Whether the said Barber had assigned to him the precise place which should be anointed?” Piazza replies—“He told me to anoint the walls in the neighbourhood of the *Vedra de’ Cittadini*, and to commence with his door; with which I did commence.”

“The Barber did not even anoint his own door!” remarks Verri again in a marginal note. And truly it is not needful to have his quick-sightedness to make this observation; the judges must have been blinded by passion not to make it, or else prevented by the malice of passion from taking advantage of it, if, as is more natural, this observation did suggest itself to them.

The unfortunate man fabricated with a deal of difficulty and trouble, and only when he was incited driven to it by questions; and it would be impossible to divine, whether he fabricated this promise of mercy as a probable explanation for his having accepted a commission of such a nature, or whether it had been suggested to him by a question of the judge in the mysterious conference. The same thing must be said regarding another fabrication, with which in the examination he meets another difficulty, that is, how he could handle with impunity this deadly ointment. He is asked, "whether the said Barber had informed him why he anointed the said doors and walls?" He replies; "he told me nothing; but I imagined that the said ointment was poisonous, and hurtful to human bodies; because the following morning he gave me a certain liquid to drink, telling me that it would preserve me from the poison of the ointment."

In all these replies, and in others of equal value to which it would be useless to refer, the judges found nothing to object to, or more correctly speaking, would find nothing to object to. There was only one single thing regarding which they thought it necessary to demand an explanation: "and for what reason could you not speak the former time?"

He replies; "I do not know, and neither know I to what cause to attribute my silence, unless it be to this liquid which he gave me to drink; for your Excellency has seen that, spite of the tortures I have endured, I was unable to speak."

This time, however, these men usually so easy to satisfy are not satisfied, and again demand; "wherefore he had not spoken this truth earlier, especially

when he had been tortured in such a dreadful manner, as had been the case on Saturday and yesterday."

This truth!

He replies: "I did not speak it, because I could not, and had I remained a hundred years under the cord, I should never have said anything, for I could not speak; for when anything was asked of me regarding this affair, my memory forsook me, and I could not reply." Having heard these words, the examination was closed, and the judges ordered the unfortunate man to be conducted back to prison.

But is it enough to call him the unfortunate man?

At such a question, conscience is confounded, recoils, would declare herself incompetent; it appears almost arrogant barbarity, pharisaical ostentation, to judge a man who is a prey to such agonies, and who is surrounded by such snares. But constrained to answer, conscience is forced to pronounce him also culpable: the sufferings and terrors of the innocent are much, they are of great power; but have not power sufficient to change the eternal law, to cause calumny to lose its evil nature. And compassion herself, who would excuse the tortured man, revolts against the calumniator; she has heard another innocent man accused, and she foresees other sufferings, other terrors, perhaps similar guilt.

And shall we seem to have excused these men, who created all this anguish, who spread these snares, by saying that they believed in the existence of anointings, and that torture was then in usage? We also believe in the possibility of killing a man by means of poison; but what should we say to a judge who adduced this argument to prove that he had justly condemned a

man as a poisoner? The punishment of death exists; but what should we reply to a judge who, by this argument to justify all sentences of death? No; the laws of torture were not made for the case of Guglielmo Piazza; it was the judges who desired to do so, who, so to say, invented it in this case. If he deceived them, that would have been their fault; it was their affair; but we have seen that he did not deceive them. Let us grant that they were deceived by these words of Piazza's, in the last examination; that they were able to believe a fact, represented, explained, circumstantiated in such a manner. What had influenced these words? how had they obtained them? By a means, the unlawfulness of which they could not be deceived in, and regarding which they were not deceived in reality, since they sought to conceal and disguise it.

If all that occurred afterwards had been an accidental concurrence of circumstances, the most likely to confirm the mistake, the blame would still remain with those who first opened the way. But, on the contrary, we see that all was conducted by the same will, which to support the error until the very end, all was still obliged to elude the laws, as it resisted evidence, and laughed at probity as it hardened its heart against compassion.

CHAPTER IV.

THE judge hastened with the constables to Mora's house, where they found him in the shop. Here was another criminal who did not think of flight, nor even of concealment, although his accomplice had been in prison since four days. His son was with him, and the judge commanded that they should be both arrested.

Verri, upon consulting the books belonging to the parish of San Lorenzo, discovered that this unhappy Barber must have had three daughters also; one about fourteen years of age, another twelve, and a third who had scarcely turned her sixth year. It is a fine thing to see a man rich, noble, celebrated, and in office, take upon himself the charge of disinterring the memory of a poor, obscure, forgotten—what do I say?—of an infamous family; and amidst a posterity which has blindly inherited the foolish obstinacy of its fathers, seek fresh objects for a generous and wise compassion. Certainly, it is not a reasonable thing to oppose compassion to justice, which ought to punish even when forced to pity, and which would no longer be justice were it to pardon the crimes of the guilty through compassion for the grief of the innocent. But compassion is a powerful reason against violence and fraud. And had there merely been this first agony of this wife and mother, this sudden revelation

of so new a terror, this grief of the young girls when they saw hands laid upon their father and brother when they saw them bound and treated as wicked offenders; it would in itself have been a fearful charge against those who had not received this duty from the hands of justice, nay, were not even permitted by law to proceed so far.

For before proceeding to arrest a suspected criminal, proofs are naturally required. And in this case there was neither public rumour, nor flight, nor complaint of an offended party, nor any accusation from any one worthy of belief, nor yet any deposition or evidence—there was no *corpus delicti*, there was nothing beyond the words of a supposed accomplice. And before such words, which had not the slightest value in themselves, could empower the judge with authority to proceed, many conditions were necessary. More than one essential was neglected, as we shall have occasion to see; and it would be easy to show that many others were disregarded. But there is no need of this; for had every formality been fulfilled with the greatest exactitude, there was still in this case a circumstance which rendered the accusation radically and incurably null; it had taken place through promise of impunity. “The one who reveals through the hope of impunity, either conceded by the law or promised by the judge, shall not be considered evidence against the accused,” says Farinacci.* As Bossi says, “it may be objected to the witness that what he has said, he has said because impunity has been promised him,—whilst a witness ought to speak candidly, and not from the hope of advantage —

* Quæst. xliii. 192, V. Summarum.

and this may also be applicable in those cases in which, owing to certain reasons, an exception has been made to that rule which excludes an accomplice from giving evidence; for who bears witness under promise of impunity, proclaims himself corrupted, and ought not to be believed.”* And this doctrine was not controverted.

Whilst preparations were being made for a thorough search, Mora said to the judge, “Oh, your lordship may see! I know that you are come about this ointment; your lordship sees it there; it was precisely that little vase which I had prepared for the Commissioner, but he did not come to fetch it; I thank God that I have done no evil; you might spare binding me.” The unhappy man believed that his crime consisted in having composed and sold this specific without permission.

They search everywhere, they examine all the vessels. (The barbers of this age exercised the lower branches of surgery; and from this it was an easy transition to medicine and pharmacy). Two things appeared suspicious; and with the reader’s permission we must speak of them, for the suspicion which they gave rise to in the course of this search, afterwards furnished the poor unfortunate man with a hint, a means by which to accuse himself when enduring torture. Besides, throughout the whole of this history there is a stronger sentiment than that of disgust.

In a time of pestilence it was natural that a man who had intercourse with many people, and principally with the sick, should keep himself as much as possible removed from his family. Besides, the plague itself

* *Tractat. var. tit. de Oppositionibus contra testes, 21.*

had lessened in the miserable population their cleanliness, which was never very strong. The office of justice found, in a small room behind the shop, impure vessels.

The second thing was, that in a little court was discovered "a small brick oven containing a copper boiler, in which was found some muddy water and at the bottom a certain slimy matter, yellow and white, which, when thrown against the wall, was found to stick to it." Mora said, "that it was to be washed with." The trial remarks, that he persisted in this with much obstinacy; a remark which shews how mysterious they considered this circumstance. How dared they come into such close contact with such a powerful and mysterious poison? One is not to believe that anger stifled fear; fear which, nevertheless, had in part occasioned this anger.

Among the papers was found a recipe, which the judge gave into Mora's hand that he might explain what it was. Mora tore it, for in the midst of the confusion he had taken it to be the recipe of the specific. The pieces were immediately collected; but we shall see how this unfortunate accident was afterwards brought forward against this unhappy man.

We do not learn in the extract from the trial, how many persons were arrested at the same time as Mor. Ripamonti says, that they carried off all the people out of the house and shop—the journeymen, apprentices, the wife, the children, and would have carried away any relatives who might chance to have been there.

Quitting this house, in which he should never more set foot, which should be demolished to the very

foundation, and give place to a Monument of Infamy, Mora said, "I have done no evil; if I have, let me be punished; I have made nothing since this electuary; however, if I have done wrong in anything, I beg for mercy."

He was examined the same day, and interrogated principally concerning the lye which had been found in his house, and concerning his relation to the Commissioner. Regarding the first, he replied, "Signor, I know nothing; it is the women who made it; you have only to ask them, and they will tell you. I knew no more that the lye was there, than I expected to be conducted to prison to-day."

With regard to the Commissioner, he related every thing concerning the little vase of ointment which he was to have given him, and at the same time specified all the ingredients of the ointment; he said, that his only connexion with this man consisted in his having come to his shop about a year previous to claim his professional services.

Mora's son was next examined; and it was then that the poor lad repeated the foolish story of the little vessel and the pen, to which we have already referred. On the whole, the examination was inconclusive, and Verri observes in a marginal note, "They should have questioned the Barber's son regarding the lye, and thus learned how long it had been in the boiler, how it was made, and for what purpose; by this means they would have thrown much more light upon the affair. But," adds he, "they feared that they might not find the culprit." And this truly is the key to all.

They, however, interrogated Mora's poor wife regarding this particular, who replied to the various

questions which were asked her, by saying, that she had made the lye about ten or twelve days previous; that sometimes she left lye for certain surgical purposes; that the lye which was found in their house had been kept for such purposes; but that having had no necessity for it, it had not been used.

This lye was examined by two washerwomen, and by three physicians: the women said it was lye, but adulterated; the physicians, that it was not lye; they both spoke thus, because it stuck to the bottom, and was become stringy. "In the shop of a barber," remarks Verri, "where there must be dirty linen to wash both from wounds and plasters, what more natural than to find a slimy, greasy, yellow sediment, especially after some hot summer days?"

In short there did not result a discovery from this search; there only resulted a contradiction. Padilla's advocate observes with only too much reason, that, "in the perusal of this trial, nothing like a *corpus delicti* presents itself, a requisite and necessary preamble to an act of accusation, an act so prejudicial and the evil consequences of which are so irreparable." And he remarks that this preamble was all the more necessary, as the effects which they desired to attribute to a crime—the death of so many persons—had its natural cause. "How necessary it was," says he also, "to have recourse to experience in these uncertain judgments, is shewn by the malign constellations, the prognostications of the mathematicians, which, in the year 1630, announced nothing but the plague; and finally, the sight of so many splendid cities in Italy and Lombardy desolated and destroyed by the pestilence; in which cities, however, was experienced no

fear of anointers." Error here hastens to the assistance of truth, which, however, stands in no need of such aid. It is melancholy to observe this advocate, after making this and similar observations, demonstrative of the chimerical nature of the crime, after attributing to the power of torture the deposition which accused his client, employ these strange words: "one is forced to confess, that these accused and their accomplices, instigated by their evil natures, and the desire to gain pelf, resolved as the said Barber himself confesses, to commit so heinous an offence."

In the letter of information addressed to the Governor, the Minister of Justice speaks thus of the circumstance: "the Barber has been arrested, and in his house a certain mixture has been found and of a very suspicious nature, according to the judgment of competent persons." Suspicion! that is the word with which a judge commences, but with which he never willingly ends, and then only after he has essayed all means by which to arrive at certainty. And did we not already know, or could we not divine, what means might have been employed by the judges to ascertain the true nature of this filth—if such had been their desire—the President of the trial would himself have told us.

In this second letter to which we have just referred, and by which the Tribunal of Health informed the Governor of the attempt made on the 18th of May, mention is made of a certain experiment tried upon some dogs, "to ascertain whether such ointments were poisonous or not." They had no prisoner in their power upon whom they might try the experiment of torture, and against whom the mob might clamour.

Before putting Mora to the torture, the judges wished to obtain clearer and more precise information from the Commissioner; and the reader will say there was need of this. They had him therefore brought before them, and demanded whether what he had before stated was the truth, and whether he recollected anything else? He confirmed his statement, but found nothing fresh to add.

They said, "it was very improbable that nothing should have passed between him and the said Barba beyond what he had told them, especially when the affair was of such a grave nature as only to be trusted for execution to another person, after a serious and confidential negotiation, and not thus hastily, as he had affirmed."

This observation was just, but it came late. Why not have made it at first, when Piazza confessed the thing in these terms? Why call such a thing true? Had they such an obtuse and slow perception that they required a whole day to perceive that such a confession was not true? Had they? Quite the contrary. They had a very delicate perception, and delicate even. Were not they the same men who had immediately discovered how improbable it was that Piazza should not have heard of the secret walls in the *Via della Veste*, nor even know the names of certain deputies? And wherefore so ready at cavilling in one case, and such ready satisfaction in another?

The reason was known to them, and to Him who knows all things: one little circumstance we ourselves observe, which is that they discovered the improbability when it could serve as a pretext

Piazza's torture; they did not discover it, when it would have been too manifest an obstacle to the arrest of Mora.

We have seen, it is true, that Piazza's deposition, as radically null, could not authorise such a proceeding. But, as they so earnestly desired to make use of this deposition, it was at least necessary to preserve it entire. If in the first examination the judges had said to Piazza, "Here is much improbability;" if he had not solved the difficulty, by presenting the fact under a less strange form, and without contradicting himself (a thing which was little to be hoped), the judges would have seen themselves reduced to the necessity of either leaving Mora in repose or of imprisoning him, after having themselves protested in anticipation against such an act.

The observation was accompanied by a terrific admonition. "And therefore if he will not resolve to speak the entire truth, as he has promised, if he should weaken his former confession, or will not divulge all that has passed between him and the said Barber, the impunity promised him shall no longer avail; whereas speaking the truth, he may count upon the promise of impunity."

We now see, as he have already hinted, what advantage the judges had gained by not applying to the Governor for an authority to grant this impunity. Granted by him with the full weight of royal authority, confirmed by a solemn act, and inserted in the trial, it could not have been thus easily withdrawn. Words spoken by a judge may be annulled by other words.

We should observe that impunity for Barnello was besought from the Governor on the 5th of September,

that is, after the execution of Piazza, Mora, and other unfortunate victims. They could then well afford to let some one escape; the wild beast had already eaten, and its roarings were not likely to be any longer so impatient or so imperious.

Hearing this admonition, the Commissioner, who had resolved to persist in his miserable design, sharpened his wits as much as he could; but after all only managed to repeat his former story. "I will tell your lordship; two days before he gave me the ointment, the said Barber was on the *Corso di Porta Ticinese*, with three companions; and seeing me pass, he said to me, *Commissario*, I have an ointment to give you: I said, Will you give it me now? He said, No, and did not then tell me for what purpose this ointment was; but when he afterwards gave it me, he said it was ointment to anoint the walls with, in order to kill people; but I did not ask him whether he had tried it." The first time Piazza declared, 'he told me nothing; but I imagined that the ointment was poisonous:' the second time; 'he said that it was to kill people.' But without paying any attention to this contradiction, they ask—"who were those persons with the said Barber, and how were they dressed?"

Who they were, he did not know; he suspected that they were some of Mora's neighbours; how they were dressed, he did not remember; he would only maintain that all that he had deposed against him was true. Interrogated whether he was willing to maintain this to his face, he replied Yes. He is put to the torture "to purge the infamy," and that his words may serve as evidence against the new victim.

The times of torture are, thanks be to Heaven.

now far enough removed for these times to require explanation. A Roman law prescribes that “the testimony of a gladiator or similar person shall without torture be of no value.”* Jurisprudence had later determined, under the title of *infamous*, the class of persons to whom this rule should apply, and the criminal, either through confession or conviction, entered into the category. It was in this manner, therefore, that they meant torture should purge the infamy. As infamous, they said, the accomplice is not worthy of belief; but when he affirms something contrary to his own present interest, one may believe that it is the truth which torture forces him to confess. If, therefore, after an accused has turned accuser he is ordered either to retract, or else again to endure torture, and still persists in his accusation; and if upon this threat being put into execution, he still in the midst of torture persists, his word becomes worthy of belief; torture has “purged the infamy,”—thus restoring to the confession of the accused that authority which it had lost through his own want of character.

And wherefore then did they not torture Piazza to make him confirm his just deposition? Was not this torture to prevent his compromising his last deposition, so insufficient and yet so necessary for the arrest of Mora? Certainly such an omission renders the present proceeding still more illegal; since it was a generally received doctrine, that the accusation of a disgraced criminal, unconfirmed by torture, might certainly, like any other evidence more or less defective, authorise the judge to institute an inquiry, but not to proceed against the individual.† And with

* *Dig. lib. xxii. tit. v. de Testibus*, l. 21, 22.

† *V. Farniaci, Quæst. xliii. 134, 135.*

regard to the Milanese usage, this is what Claro attests: "In order that the assertion of the accomplice be believed, it is necessary that it should be confirmed by torture, since being himself infamous through his own crime, he cannot be admitted as witness without torture; and this is the usage with us."*

Was therefore the torture to which this Commissioner was subjected in this last examination even legal? Certainly not; it was unjust according to law,—for it was employed to confirm an accusation which nothing could render valid, on account of the impunity promised to the prisoner. And only see how Bossi had warned them: "Torture being an irreparable evil be careful not to occasion useless suffering to the suspected criminal in such cases, that is to say, when there are no other presumptions or proofs of crime."

But how? did they then violate the law, both by commanding and omitting torture? Certainly; and where is the wonder, if having once entered the evil path, they should reach two diverging tracks which were good neither one nor the other?

For the rest, it is easy to divine that torture applied with the intent of causing the criminal to retract an accusation would not be as severe as that applied with the intent of causing self-accusation. In fact, they had neither the time to write down exclamations, nor to register cries nor groans; he tranquilly reiterated his deposition.

They twice demanded wherefore he had not made a similar confession in his former examinations? One sees that they could not drive from their minds the

* *Op. cit.* Quest. xxi. 13.

† *Op. cit.* tit. de *Judiciis et Considerationibus, ante torturam*, 152.

doubts, from their hearts a feeling of remorse, that this foolish history was merely inspired by this promise of impunity. He replied: "I was prevented by the liquid which was given me to drink, as I have already said." They would certainly have liked something more conclusive; but they were obliged to content themselves. They had neglected—what do I say?—they had avoided, excluded every means by which they could have arrived at the truth: from the two contrary conclusions which could result from this research, they had chosen one, and employed first one means, then another, to obtain it, cost what it might; could they expect to find in it that satisfaction which truth sincerely sought after can only give? To extinguish the light is a very good means to prevent our seeing what is unpleasant, but not a good means to shew us what we desire to see.

Having descended from the rack, and whilst he was being unbound, the Commissioner said, "My Lord, I should like to reflect upon this until to-morrow, and I will then fully confess to you all that I have been able to recollect, both regarding him and others."

Whilst he was being reconducted to prison, he stopped saying, "I have yet something to say;" and he named as friends of Mora, and as people of evil report, this Barnello and two "*foresari*,"* Girolamo and Gaspare Migliavacca, father and son.

Thus did the unfortunate man seek to supply by the number of victims the want of proof. But could not those who examined him perceive that his willing-

* Grinders of scissars to cut gold thread. The existence of a separate profession for this secondary branch shews how flourishing must have been the principal trade.

ness to increase the list of accomplices was a proof of his having nothing more to reply! It was they who had questioned him regarding circumstances which rendered the fact probable; and one cannot say that those who proposed the difficulty did not persist in it. These fresh denunciations, or rather their effect at denunciation, seemed openly to declare, you say, that I shall throw light upon a certain fact: but is that possible, if the fact do not exist? But in such cases what you desire are persons to condemn; here are persons then; it is for you to do with them what you like; you will succeed with some; you have succeeded only too well with me.

The three individuals, namely Piazza and others who, as the trial proceeded, were accused upon similar evidence, and who were condemned with equal confidence, we shall only mention so far as they concern the history of Piazza and Mora (who, being the first who had fallen in the hands of the judges, were always regarded as the principal authors of the crime). We mention only when their history affords anything particularly worthy of remark. For the present, as elsewhere, passing over all secondary incidents and events, let us come to Mora's second examination, which took place upon the same day.

After various questions regarding his specific use of the lye, and regarding certain lizards which he had employed some children to catch, for the composition of some medicament of the time (questions which he answered like a man who has nothing to conceal or invent), they laid before him the pieces of paper which he had torn during the visit of the officers of justice. "I recognise it," said he, "to be the writing which

I inadvertently tore up; you can arrange the pieces together, and I will recall to mind the person by whom it was given to me."

They then passed on to the examination which follows:—"How happened it, that being merely acquainted with the said Commissioner Guglielmo Piazza, as had been deposed by him in the preceding examination, this Commissioner had so familiarly asked for the said vase of preservative, and that he, the accused, had offered so freely and readily to give it him, and proposed that he should come and fetch it, as had been related by the other."

Here is again brought into the field the concise argument of probability. When Piazza asserted at first, that the Barber, with whom he exchanged "the greetings of the day," with the same "freedom and readiness," had offered him a vase of ointment to kill people with, no difficulty was started; but when the Barber states that this was a remedy, a thousand are started. Yet it appears natural that they should use less precaution in seeking after a necessary accomplice in a light transgression, and for a thing which in itself was very innocent, than they should have done, and unnecessarily, in a dangerous and execrable outrage; this is no fresh discovery which has been made in these two last centuries. It was not the man of the seventeenth century who reasoned thus illogically, it was the man of passion. Mora replied, "I did so for my own interest."

He was then asked whether he knew the people named by Piazza; he replied that he knew them, but that he was not their friend, for "they were certain people who must be left to their own affairs."

They demand whether he knew who had smeared the walls of the city? and he replies "no." Again asked, whether he knew from whom the Commissioner had received this ointment to anoint the walls with he again replies "no."

Finally, they demanded if he knew whether any one, offering money to the said Commissioner, had incited him to anoint the walls of the *Vetra de' Cittadini*, and had afterwards given him a little glass vase containing ointment. He replied, inclining his head and lowering his voice (*flectens caput, et submissa voce*), "I know nothing."

Perhaps it was only at that moment he perceived what a strange and horrible issue these questions might lead to. And who knows in what manner this question might not have been put to him by these judges, who, uncertain, willing or unwilling, of their discovery, were therefore obliged all the more to make an effort to appear informed, and to shew themselves in anticipation strongly opposed to the denial they foresaw. They took no note of their own countenances and of the gestures which they made. They therefore proceeded to ask him, point blank, whether "he, the accused, had requested the said Guglielmo Piazza, Commissioner of the Tribunal of Health, to anoint the walls in the neighbourhood of the *Vetra de' Cittadini*, and whether to this intent he had given him a little vase of glass containing the ointment which he should employ, promising to give the said Piazza a quantity of money."

He exclaimed, rather than replied, "Signor, no! My God, no! no, no, never! I do such things." These are words which might be spoken by a guilty

as well as an innocent man; but not in the same manner.

The judges replied, by asking him, "what he would say when this said Guglielmo Piazza, Commissioner of the Tribunal of Health, should maintain this truth to his face."

Again, 'this truth!' They only knew this thing from the deposition of a supposed accomplice; and they themselves had that very same day told him whilst giving evidence, "that there was a deal in his relation that was improbable;" he had been unable to add anything, not even the faintest shadow of probability, without being contradicted; and yet they boldly spoke to Mora of "this truth!" Was this, I repeat, the rudeness of the times? was it the barbarity of the law? was it ignorance? was it superstition? or was it one of those cases in which iniquity lies against itself?

Mora replied, "if he should say that to my face, I would tell him that he was an infamous man, and that he could not say so, for he has never spoken with me about such a thing, as God preserve me!"

Piazza is brought, and in the presence of Mora, he is asked in succession, whether such and such, and such a thing is true; every thing, in fact, that he has stated. He replies, "Yes, My Lord, it is true." Poor Mora cries, "ah, God of mercy! that will never be proved!"

The Commissioner: "only see to what I am reduced through assisting you."

Mora: "it will never be proved. You will never prove that you have been into my house." The Commissioner: "would that I had never been to your

house, as I have been; see to what I am reduced through you."

Mora: "it will never be proved that you have been to my house."

After this, they were removed, each one to his prison.

The Minister of Justice, in the letter to the Governor already quoted, gives an account of this interview in the following terms: "Piazza has bravely maintained to Mora's face that his having received this ointment from him is true, together with the circumstances of the place and time." From this, Spinola must have necessarily believed that Piazza had specified these circumstances in opposition to Mora, whilst in reality this bravery merely consisted in a — "Signor, yes, it is true."

The letter ends thus, "diligent search is still made after the other accomplices or instigators. Meanwhile I wished your Excellency to be informed of all that has passed: I humbly kiss your hands, and wish you a happy issue to your enterprises." It is probable that other letters were written, which have since been lost. As far as the enterprises were concerned, the wish was in vain. Spinola, receiving no reinforcements, and no longer hoping to take Casale, fell sick, partly through rage, about the commencement of September, and died on the 25th, failing to merit at the end of his life, the illustrious surname of "taker of cities," which he had acquired in Flanders, and saying in Spanish, "they have deprived me of my honour." They had done him a far greater injury by conferring upon him a post to which so many obligations were annexed, among which, only one appears

to have seriously occupied his attention; and probably solely for this one, had the post been given him.

The day after the interview, the Commissioner requested to be heard, and being introduced, said: “the Barber has said that I have never been to his house; for this, let your lordship examine Baldassa Litta, who lives with Antiano, in the street of St. Bernadino, and Stefano Buzzio, the dyer, who lives under the porch opposite St. Agostino, near St. Ambrogio, who know that I have been in the house and shop of the said Barber.”

Had he been led by his own impulse to make such a declaration, or was it from a suggestion given him by the judges? The first would be a strange hypothesis, as the issue will shew; for the second supposition there was a very strong motive. They desired a pretext for putting Mora to torture; and among the things which, according to the opinion of many doctors, could give to the accusation of the accomplice a value which it had not of itself, and render the proof sufficient to authorise the torture of the accused, was the facts of friendship existing between them. Only friendship sufficed, not any kind of an acquaintance; for, ‘understanding it thus,’ says Farinacci, ‘every accusation of an accomplice would be evidence,—it being so easy for the accuser to know the accused in some way; but a frequent and intimate intercourse, is necessary to render probable their having concerted a crime.’ On this account they had from the commencement demanded, ‘whether the said Barber was a friend of his, the accused?’ But the reader remembers the reply, ‘a friend—yes, we wish each other the salutations of the day.’ The menaces afterwards em-

ployed had produced nothing more; and that what they had sought as a means had become an obstacle. It is true that it was not, nor could ever become a legal means, and the most intimate and longest proved friendship would have been unable to give value to an accusation, rendered incurably null by a promise of impunity. But this difficulty, like so many others which did not materially result from the trial, was passed over; this one they had themselves brought forward by their questions, and it was necessary to see about removing it. In the trial are related certain conversations of gaolers, constables, and of people imprisoned for other crimes, who had been placed in company with the unhappy men, 'to draw something out of their mouths.' It is, therefore, more than probable that by some such means the judges had sent word to the Commissioner that his safety would depend upon the proofs which he gave of his friendship with Mora. and that the unhappy man, in order to avoid saying that none existed, had recourse to an expedient, which he would never have thought of by himself. For how much the testimony of the two men he cited might be depended upon will be seen in their depositions. Baldazza Litta being questioned, 'whether he has ever seen Piazza in Mora's house or shop,' says, 'no, my Lord.' Stefano Buzzio questioned, 'whether he knew that any friendship existed between the said Piazza and the Barber, says, 'it may be that they are friends, and that they saluted each other; but I cannot tell your lordship so.' Questioned, 'whether the said Piazza had ever been in the house or shop of the said Barber,' he replied, 'I cannot tell, your lordship.'

They next wished to hear another witness for the

verification of a circumstance asserted by Piazza in his deposition; which was, that a certain Matteo Volpi had been present when the Barber had said to him, "I have here something to give you." Now Volpi, questioned regarding this, not only replied that he knew nothing of the fact, but when again interrogated, resolutely added, "I will swear that I have never seen them speak together."

The following day, the 30th of June, was Mora submitted to a fresh examination, and the reader would never guess how it was commenced.

"Let him, the accused, say wherefore he, in his second examination, when confronted with Guglielmo Piazza, Commissioner of the Tribunal of Health, denied having more than the slightest acquaintance with him, saying that he had never been in his house, a circumstance which, on the contrary, was maintained to his face; whilst he had, in his first examination, appeared to know him perfectly, a thing which had been confirmed by other witnesses during the course of the trial, and also by his readiness in offering and preparing for him the vase of preservative, a fact attested in his preceding examination."

Mora replied, "it is very true that the said Commissioner has often passed my shop; but he has intercourse neither with my household nor with myself."

The judges replied, "this is not only contrary to his first deposition, but to the depositions of other witnesses ——"

Any observation would be superfluous.

They did not dare to put him to the torture on the deposition of Piazza; but what did they do? They had recourse to their expedient of improbabilities;

and what is scarcely to be believed, is, that one of these improbabilities was his having denied all friendship with Piazza, and that Piazza had admittance to his house, whilst, at the same time, he asserted having promised him this preservative! Another improbability was, that he could not give a satisfactory account of why he had torn that writing into bits. For Mora still persisted in saying that he had done it without reflection, not thinking that such a thing could be important to justice; or it might be he feared the poor unhappy man! to convict himself by confessing that he had done this to remove the proof of a transgression; or, perhaps, he really did not know how to account to himself for all that he had done in those first moments of confusion and terror. But be that as it may, these pieces the inquisitors possessed; and if they believed that in this writing might be found evidence of the crime, they could place them together, and read them; this was Mora's own suggestion. Who would believe that they had not already done this?

They signified to Mora, menacing him with the torture, that he should speak the truth regarding these two points. He replied, "I have already told you what passed regarding the writing; the Commissioner may say what he chooses, but what he said is an infamous lie, for I have given him nothing."

He believed (and ought he not to have believed?) that after all it was truth which they desired of him; but not so. They said, "that it was not this particular they required from him, that they did not question him regarding it, and that for the present moment they only desired to know for what reason

he had torn the said writing, and why he had denied, and still persisted in denying, that the said Commissioner had been at his shop, appearing almost as though he had no knowledge of him."

It would not, I imagine, be easy to meet with another example of so impudently hypocritical a respect for legal formalities. As it was only too evident that the judges possessed no right to command torture for the principal, one might almost say sole, object of accusation, they wished it to appear the torture was applied for some other reason. The mantle of injustice is, however, scanty; and it is impossible to draw it over one side without uncovering the other. Moreover, it was clear that to attain this violent end they had only two most wicked pretexts; one which they had themselves declared to be such, by refusing to inform themselves regarding the contents of the writing; the other demonstrated to be such, and even worse, by the evidence with which they had attempted to create a legal proof.

But did not they desire more? Even should these depositions have fully confirmed the second declaration of Piazza regarding this accessory circumstance, even had it not been called forth by means of this offer of impunity, the evidence of Piazza could no longer furnish any legal proof. "The accomplice who varies and contradicts himself in his depositions, thus incurring the reproach of perjury, cannot furnish such evidence as shall authorise the torture of the accused, nor even search after such individuals as may be named by him; and this doctrine may be said to be commonly received by the doctors."*

* Farinacci, *Quest.* xliii. 185, 186.

Mora was put to the torture!

The unhappy man had not the robust constitution of his calumniator. For some time, however, the pain only extracted from him cries of supplication and protestations of having spoken the truth. "Alas, my God! I have no knowledge of this man; I have never had any intercourse with him, and therefore I cannot say—and wherefore does he tell such truths, as that he has frequented my house, and has never entered my shop. I am dead! Mercy, my lord; mercy! I tore the writing, believing that it was the recipe of my electuary, for I wished to have all the gain myself."

"This is not a sufficient cause," they said to him. He prayed that they would let him down that he might speak the truth. He was let down, and said, "The truth is that the Commissioner had no intercourse with me." Again was the torture recommenced and increased; and to the cruel solicitations of his examiners, the unhappy wretch replied, "Your lordships see that what you wish me to say I will say." The reply of Philotas to the one who tortured him by order of Alexander the Great, 'who was himself listening behind a curtain,'* '*Dic quid me velis dicere*,'† and which has been the reply of heaven knows how many other unhappy beings.

At length the agony becoming greater than his fear of calumniating himself, or than even the thought of his execution, he said, "I gave to the Commissioner a little vessel full of filth, with which he might anoint the wall. Will your lordship permit me to be released, and then I will speak the truth."

* Plutarch's Life of Alexander.

† Q. Curtii. vi. 11.

It was thus they succeeded in making Mora confirm the conjectures of the constable, in the same manner that Piazza had confirmed the fancies of the women; this time through an illegal torture, the former time through an illegal offer of impunity. The weapons were taken from the arsenal of jurisprudence, but the blows were struck arbitrarily and treacherously.

Perceiving that pain produced the effect they so much desired, they paid no heed to the supplications of their victim, who besought that this torture might immediately cease. They commanded him to commence speaking.

He said, "that it was a mixture of filth and lye,"—this was the effect of that visit to the boiler, commenced with such ceremony and terminated with such treachery,—“and it was the Commissioner himself who had asked for it to smear the houses with, together with some of that matter which issues from the mouths of the dead who are carried away in the carts.” And neither was this an invention of his own. In a succeeding examination, being interrogated as to “where he had learned to make this composition,” he replied, “I heard it said in my shop that this matter which issues from the mouths of the dead was employed —— and I thought of adding the other mixtures to it.” He might have replied, ‘I learned it from my assassins, from you, and from the public.’

But a strange circumstance still remains unnoticed. How was it that Mora made a confession which the judges had not requested, which they had even excluded from the examination, by saying that “it was

not this particular they required from him—that he did not question him regarding it?" Since it was pain which compelled him to lie, it appears that the lie should at least be proportionate to the interrogation. He might call himself the intimate friend of the Commissioner; he might have invented some culpable, exaggerated motive for having set up the writing; but wherefore lie more than he was absolutely forced to? Perhaps, whilst he was overpowered with the agony, certain means were suggested to him by which the agony might be appeased! If they address other questions to him which are registered in the trial? If such were the case, we may have deceived ourselves by saying that they deceived the Governor by allowing him to believe that Piazza had been questioned regarding the crime. If we did not then suggest the suspicion that there was in the proceedings of the trial, rather than in the letter, it was because the facts at that time did not give us a sufficient motive. Now the difficulty is to admit a very strange fact—a fact which almost obliges us to form a horrible supposition, in addition to the many horrors which were evident enough. We are ourselves, I say, wavering between the belief that Mora, without being tortured, accused himself of a horrible crime which he had not committed, and which would occasion him a frightful death, and the conjecture that the judges, at the very time they acknowledged having no sufficient right to extort from him by torture, a confession of this crime, profited by the torture applied under another pretext, to draw the confession from his mouth. The reader will see how to decide for himself.

The examination which succeeded to the torture was, on the judges' part, like that of the Commissioner which followed, the promise of impunity; a mixture, or rather a strife of folly and cunning, a multiplying of questions without foundation, and an omission of researches the most evidently indicated by the case, and the most imperiously prescribed by the law.

The principle admitted that "no one commits a crime without a cause;" and the fact acknowledged that "many accused criminals, weak of mind or of courage, had confessed crimes, and then later, after the sentence, or at the moment of its execution, had protested that they had not committed them, and its having been found, when there was no longer time, that in fact they had not committed them," jurisprudence had established that "confession should be worthless, did it not indicate the cause of the crime, and was not this cause probable, serious, and in proportion to the crime itself."

Now this unhappy Mora, reduced to improvise new fables, as confirmation of what should conduct him to a horrible death, said in this examination, that the foam of people who had died of the plague he had received from the Commissioner; that it was the Commissioner who had proposed the crime to him; and that their motive for having made and accepted such a proposal was, that many people falling sick by this means they should both of them gain much profit—one from his post as Commissioner, the other by the sale of his preservative. We will not demand of the reader, whether between the enormity and the danger of such a crime and the importance of such gains (which nature only aided too much) there was any

proportion. But if the reader should imagine that these judges, though living in the seventeenth century, discovered that there was a proportion, and that still a cause appeared to them probable, he shall hear with themselves affirm to the contrary in another examination.

But there was yet something more; opposed to the cause assigned by Mora was still another difficulty more positive, more material, if not stronger. The reader will remember that the Commissioner, accusing himself, had also assigned as a reason, his having been instigated to the perpetration of the crime, that the Barber had said to him, "Anoint the walls, and then come to me, and you shall have a handful of money." Here then were two causes of the same crime, not only different, but opposed and incompatible. Had the same man, according to one confession, offered a considerable sum of money to obtain an accomplice, according to the other, consents to the crime through hope of a miserable gain. Let us forget all that we have seen of these proceedings until the present moment, how these two motives have been produced, and by what means these two confessions have been procured; let us consider the affair as things do stand. Arrived at this point, what would have been the conduct of judges whose consciences had not been perverted, obscured, stupified by passion? They would have been terrified to see themselves led so far (were it even without their own fault); they would have consoled themselves by not having reached the end of all—the irreparable; they would have passed at the obstacle, happy that it had saved them from the precipice; they would have applied themselves to

some difficulty, they would have loosened some knot; now they would have employed all the art—all the perseverance—all the detours of interrogation; now they would have had recourse to confronting the prisoners; they would not have taken a single step before discovering which of the prisoners lied, or whether, perhaps, they both lied. Our judges having received this reply from Mora, “because he would have gained plenty of money if plenty of people had fallen sick, and I should have gained plenty by my electuary,” they passed on to something else.

After this it will be enough, if not too much, to say a passing word regarding the remainder of this examination.

Questioned “whether there are other accomplices in this business,” he replies: “there may be some companions of Piazza, but I do not know who they are.” The judges protest “that it is improbable he should not know who they are.” At the sound of this word, the terrible forerunner of torture, the unhappy man suddenly affirms in the most positive manner, that “they are the scissar grinders and Barnello;” the same he had named in the preceding examination.

With regard to the poison, he said that he kept it in the oven, that is precisely where they imagined it might be; he told how he compounded it, and concluded by saying, “I threw away the rest in the *Vedra*.” We cannot avoid transcribing in this place, Verri’s marginal note. “He could not have thrown away the rest in the *Vedra* after the imprisonment of Piazza!”

He replied quite at random to the other questions

regarding time, and place, and similar things, though the whole were a clearly proved fact; and he was finally put to the torture, in order that his deposition might be of value in convicting those he had named, more especially the Commissioner, whom they had shortly before sentenced to the torture to strengthen a confession opposed to the present one in all essential points! Here we should be unable to cite texts of law, or opinions of doctors; for, in true jurisprudence had never foreseen a similar case.

Confession made whilst enduring torture was invalid, unless confirmed on another day without torture, and in another place, where could not be seen this horrible instrument. These were the inventions of science, to render an extorted confession spurious, if that were possible, and at once to satisfy good sense, which only too clearly said, that the declaration extorted by agony was unworthy of faith, and the Roman law which consecrated torture. The reason for these precautions, the interpreters deduced from the law itself, that is, from these strange words: "Torture is a fragile and perilous thing, and liable to deceive; since many persons, from strength of soul or body so scorn these torments, that it is impossible by this means to extract the truth from them; whilst on the other hand, some have so little power of endurance, that they will speak a thousand falsehoods rather than support the agony." Strange words indeed to be found in a law made for the maintenance of torture; and to comprehend which, we must recall to our recollection that this law was originally made for slaves, who through the contemptuous and unkind spirit of paganism might be considered rather

as things than persons, and upon whom therefore they considered it permitted to try any experiments, so far that they even tormented them to discover the crimes of others. The new interests of new legislators caused this law to be afterwards applied to those who were not slaves; and the power of authority caused the law to endure many centuries longer than paganism; an example more remarkable than rare, of how far a law, old as it may be, can extend itself beyond its origin, and outlive it.

To fulfil, therefore, this formality, the judges summoned Mora to a fresh examination upon the following day. But as if even obliged to introduce something deceitful, something suggestive, instead of asking whether he intended to confirm his confession, they demanded, "whether he had anything to add to the confession he had made yesterday, after they had ceased to torture him?"

But during these hours—shall we say of repose?—the sentiment of his innocence, the horror of his punishment, the thought of his wife and children, had perhaps inspired poor Mora with the hope of more bravely enduring his new tortures, for he replied, "No, my Lord, I have nothing to add to it, I have rather something to retract." Then, as if inspired with fresh courage, he continued: "This ointment, of which I spoke, I have never made; and all that I said was owing to the torture." The judges menaced him immediately with a renewal of the torture; and did so—passing over many other irregularities—without having cleared up the contradictions which existed between his and the Commissioner's confession; without being able themselves to say

whether this new torture should be given to his own or another's confession; whether as an accomplice or chief criminal; whether for a crime committed at the instigation of others, or of which he was himself the instigator; whether for a crime the perpetrators of which he would have liberally paid, or which he had hoped to derive a miserable gain.

Hearing this menace, he again replied, "I say that nothing which I yesterday said is true; I say it from the agony." He continued: "Permit me to say an Ave Maria, and afterwards I will say what the Lord shall suggest to me;" and he placed himself on his knees before the image of the crucified Christ, before Him who should one day pass judgment on his judges. Having again risen from his knees, and being pressed to confirm his confession, he said, "By my conscience there was no truth in my confession." Being immediately conducted back to the torture-chamber, and bound with this cruel addition to his record, the miserable man said, "Do not cause me to be again tortured; I wish to maintain the truth I have confessed." Unbound and re-conducted into the judgment-hall, he again repeated, "Nothing of what I said is true." He is again condemned to the torture, and once more he says all that his judges desire; and the agony having succeeded in consuming the few remains of his courage, he declares himself ready to ratify his confession, yet he does not even wish to hear it read. This the judges will not consent to, scrupulous in observing an inconclusive formal confession whilst they violate the most important and positive statutes. The confession having been read, he says, "it is all true."

After which, persisting in their method of never prosecuting research, of never encountering difficulties, except after torture—a thing which law itself had thought fit expressly to prohibit, and which Diocletian and Maximanus had wished to prevent,—they finally demanded whether he had had any end in view beyond that of gaining money by his electuary. He replied, “As for myself, I had no other end in view, of which I am aware.”

“Of which I am aware!” Who but he could have known what passed within him? Yet these singular words were adapted to the circumstance; the unfortunate man could have employed none which would have more fully shewn how completely he had abandoned himself, and how he consented to affirm, to deny, and to know only those things which would please the men who could command torture.

The judges proceeded, by saying, “It was very improbable that, from the mere design of procuring more employment for the Commissioner, and a greater sale for his own preservative, they should, by anointing the doors, have resolved upon the destruction and death of so many people; and that, therefore, he should say with what design and wherefore they two had resolved to do this thing for so slight an interest.”

Here is this charge of improbability again brought forward. They had then merely menaced and applied torture at various times to make him confirm an improbable confession! The observation was just, but it came too late, we must again remark, since the recurrence of the same circumstance obliges us to make use of the same words. Even as they had not observed improbability in the deposition of Piazza,

until by virtue of it they had imprisoned Mora, and they now only perceive improbability in Mora's confession when they had extorted from him a confirmation of it, which in their hands became a sufficient means for his condemnation. Are we to suppose that in reality they had only this moment perceived the improbability? How shall we then explain, how qualify their retaining as valid such a confession after such an observation? But perhaps Mora gave a more satisfactory reply? Here is Mora's reply: "If the Commissioner does not know, neither do I; he must know, and your lordship will learn from him, for he has been the inventor." One sees that these unhappy men cast the principal guilt on each other, not so much to diminish their own share in it, as to escape the task of explaining things which were not to be explained.

After a similar reply, the judges signified that, "for having compounded the said composition and ointment in concert with the said Commissioner, and for having afterwards given some of the ointment to the Commissioner to anoint the walls of the houses with, in the manner which had been declared by him to the accused, and by the said Commissioner, with the intent of destroying people, as the said Commissioner had confessed, he, the accused, had rendered himself guilty of the deaths of many persons; and that for having acted in this manner he had incurred the punishments reserved by the law for those who commit, or attempt to commit, such acts."

Let us sum up the proceedings. The judges say to Mora: "How is it possible that you have determined to commit so great a crime for so small a gain?"

Mora replies: "The Commissioner ought to know both for himself and for me; ask him." He refers them to another for the explanation of an act of his own conscience, and that they may clearly understand how a certain motive has been sufficient to produce in him a certain determination. And to whom does he refer them?—to a man who does not admit this motive, for he attributes the crime to quite another cause.

Yet the judges consider that the difficulty is solved, and that the crime is become probable, so much so, indeed, that they consider Mora the criminal.

It cannot be ignorance which caused them to see improbability in such a motive; it was not jurisprudence which caused them to pay so little regard to the conditions imposed by jurisprudence.

CHAPTER V.

IMPUNITY and torture had produced two histories, and although such iniquitous judges pronounced condemnations, we shall now see how they laboured and succeeded, as far as it was possible, in fusing two histories into one; and, in the last place, we shall see how they appeared to have persuaded themselves that really this was the fact.

The Senate confirmed and proclaimed the decision of its delegates. "Having heard what resulted from the confession of Giangiacomo Mora, having considered what preceded it, and considered every thing except that for one single crime there were two separate principal authors, two separate causes, two separate successions of effects—" the Senate decreed that the said Mora should be again most diligently questioned, yet without torture, to induce him to explain the things which he had confessed, and to draw from him the names of other guilty persons, authors, accomplices, or instigators of the crime. That, the examination terminated, he should be accused of having composed the deadly ointment, and of having given it to Guglielmo Piazza; and that the term of three days should be assigned him for the preparation of his defence. And also that Piazza should be questioned as to whether he had anything to add to his confession, which was considered to be incor-

and, having nothing, should be accused of spreading the said ointment; when a like term of three days should be assigned him for his defence." Which was the same as saying, "see that you extort from both one and the other as much as you can; at all events, let them be proclaimed guilty, each by his own confession, although these may be two conflicting confessions.

They commenced with Piazza, and on the very same day. He had nothing more to confess, and knew not that his judges were possessed of knowledge; when he accused an innocent man, he did not perhaps foresee that he was raising up for himself an accuser. They demanded, wherefore he had not confessed to having given the Barber foam from the mouths of people who had died of the plague, as an ingredient for this ointment? "I have given him none," Piazza replied; as if those who had believed his lies would be willing to believe his truth. After a crowd of incoherent questions, they declared, "That not having spoken the entire truth as he had promised, neither could he enjoy the impunity which had been promised him." He immediately added, "Signor, it is true that the Barber requested me to take him some of this material, and I took him some for the ointment." He hoped that, by admitting every thing, he should recover his impunity. Then, either to gain more merit or more time, he added, that the money promised him by the Barber was to come from "a great personage;" that he had learned this from the Barber himself, but had never been able to draw from his lips the name of this personage. The fact was, he had not time to invent the name.

The following day, Mora was questioned regarding this circumstance, and probably he would have invented the name had he been put to the torture. But as we have already seen, torture was this time expressly excluded by the Senate, who wished to render the new confirmation of the preceding confession less apparently extorted. However, being questioned "Whether he, the accused, had been the first to request the Commissioner, etc., and whether he had promised him a quantity of money?" he replied: "Signor, no; and whence should I promise all this money?" The judges might have recollected that, in the minute search which had been made in his house the day he was arrested, the only treasure which had been found was five *parpagliole*, contained in a cup. When questioned regarding "the great personage," he replied: "Your lordship desires merely the truth, and the truth I have already spoken whilst under torture, and something more than the truth."

In neither of the two extracts is mention made of Piazza's having confirmed the preceding confession: if, as we are led to believe, the judges had extorted such a confirmation from him, these words were a protest, the full force of which he did not know, but they did.

After this, the proceedings of the trial were communicated to him and Piazza, and the space of two days granted them for the preparation of their defence: and we are unable to divine wherefore the term was one day less than that granted by the Senate. A pleader was assigned to each of the unhappy men, but the one assigned to Mora excused himself. Verri conjectures that this refusal arose from a cause which,

alas! was anything but strange in this complication of affairs. "Fury," says he, "had reached such a height, that it was considered a wicked and dishonourable action to defend this miserable victim." But in the printed extract, which Verri could not have seen, is registered the true cause, perhaps no less strange, nay even in one way still more melancholy. "The same day, the 2d of July, the notary, Mauri, called upon to defend Mora, said, "I cannot accept this duty; for, in the first place, I am a Notary of the Criminal Court, and can therefore accept no cause; and secondly, I am neither an attorney nor an advocate. I will, however, to gratify him, go and speak with him, but I cannot accept the cause." Here then, to a man whom they had conducted almost to the foot of the scaffold, and by what means, and to endure what sufferings!—to a man as utterly deprived of all support as of all knowledge, and who could only receive aid through them; these judges gave as his defender, a notary, who required all necessary qualities,—nay, whose very situation rendered him wholly incompetent for such a charge? Could these judges have acted with greater levity, even granting that malice had no part in their proceedings? Was it for a subordinate to recall them to the observation of rules, the most known and the most sacred?

Upon his return, Mauri said: "I have been with Mora, who has freely told me that he has committed no crime, and that what he said was merely owing to the torture. And because I frankly told him that I neither would nor could take upon myself the duty of defending him, he besought that the Signor President would deign to provide him with a defender,

and would not condemn him undefended." V: such words did innocence supplicate injustice for favours!

The pleader assigned to Piazza appeared and requested to be shewn the trial of his client, which having obtained, he read. Was this the only assistance afforded for defence? Not always, for the advocate of Padilla, who became, as we shall immediately see, the concrete of "the great personage," of an abstract and unfounded idea, was allowed to read the minutes of the trial long enough to transcribe a considerable portion which through this very means has fallen under our notice.

At the expiration of the two days the unhappy besought a prolongation of the term. "The Senate conceded them the whole of the following day, and no more (*et non ultra*)."

The defence of Padilla was presented at three different times: the first portion on the 24th of July 1631, "which was admitted with prejudice to the power of later presenting the remainder;" a second, on the 13th of April 1632; and the last, on the 10th of May of the same year. Padilla remained therefore in arrest about two years. Certainly a shameful delay for an innocent man; compared with the precipitation employed in the case of Mora and Piazza, in which alone their sufferings were protracted, such slowness appears a monstrous instance of partiality.

This fresh fabrication of Piazza suspended for a few days the execution of their sentence; days full of false hopes, together with new and cruel tortures and new and melancholy examinations. The Judges of the Tribunal was commissioned to receive in great

cresy, and without the presence of a notary, a new deposition from Piazza; and this time it was the accused himself who, by means of his advocate, promoted this interview, giving it to be understood that he had yet something more to divulge relative to the great personage." He probably thought that he could succeed in drawing into this net—this net so voracious of prey and so jealous of its loss—a large fish; this fish, in escaping, would make so large a rent that the little ones might escape at the same time. And as among the various conjectures which had been circulated from mouth to mouth among the people relative to the horrible attempt of the 18th of May, it had been suggested that the perpetrators were certain Spanish officers, the miserable fabricator discovered something upon which he might base his story. The circumstance of Padilla being the son of the Commandant of the Castle, and having therefore a powerful protector, who to assist his son would have been able to annul the trial, was probably what determined Piazza to name him rather than another, unless he were the sole Spanish officer the unfortunate chanced to know even by name. After the interview, he was called upon judicially to confirm his statement. In a former deposition, he had said that the Barber would never mention to him who "this great personage" was. Now he endeavoured to maintain the contrary, and to diminish in some degree the contradiction he said that the Barber had not immediately named him. At length he told me, after the space of four or five days, that "this great personage" was a certain Padiglia, whose name I do not exactly recollect, although he told it me; I know however, and recollect perfectly,

that he said this was the son of the Signor Castello of the Castle of Milan." Not only did he deny he received money from the Barber, but even proved that he did not know whether the Barber had received any from Padilla.

This deposition was signed by Piazza, and the Judge of the Tribunal was immediately despatched to communicate with the Governor, as the trial informed, and no doubt to inquire whether he would come to Padilla, who was a captain of horse, and then Montferrat, being consigned over to civil authority. The judge having returned, and having immediately procured Piazza's confirmation of his deposition, again attacked the unhappy Mora. Upon the attempt being made to induce him to say that he had promised money to the Commissioner, and confided to him that there was some "great personage," and later told him what this was, he replied, "This will never be proved—never in eternity; if I knew this I would say so, on my conscience." The prisoners are again confronted, and Piazza is asked whether it is true that Mora promised him money, "declaring that all this was done by order and command of Padiglia, son of the Signor Castellano of Milan." Padilla's advocate observes here, with great reason, that, by thus confronting the prisoners, Mora was informed of all that the judges wished him to say." In fact, without this, and similar means, they would certainly never have succeeded in making him name this personage. Torture might have rendered him a liar, but not a conjurer.

Piazza maintained what he had deposed. "And you can say this?" exclaimed Mora. "Yes, I can say it, for it is the truth," returned the imprudent

Piazza; "it is for this you see me here; you know very well that you told me this, standing at the door of your shop." Mora, who had hoped by means of his advocate to prove his innocence, now foreseeing that fresh tortures would extort a fresh confession from him, had not even strength to oppose once more truth to falsehood. He merely replied, "Patience! through you I shall die."

In fact, Piazza is again remanded, and being again ordered "to speak the truth," has scarcely replied, "My Lord, I have spoke it," before he is menaced with torture; "which shall always be done without prejudice to what has been proved and confessed, and not otherwise." This was a customary form: but the fact of its being now applied shews how completely their rage to condemn the prisoners had deprived the judges of all power of reflection. How was it possible that the confession of having instigated Piazza to the crime by the promise of money, which they should both of them receive from Padilla, should not be prejudicial to Mora's confession, in which he declares himself to have been induced by Piazza to join in the crime through the hope of gaining something by his preservative?

Being subjected to the torture he immediately confirmed all that the Commissioner had said; but this not being enough for the judges, he said that, in fact, Padilla had proposed that he should anoint "the doors and locks," promising him as much money as he should desire, and having given as much as he desired.

We who experience neither terror of anointings, nor rage against anointers, can clearly see, and without

the slightest trouble, from whence this confession has proceeded, and how it has been brought about. And were it necessary, we have moreover the declaration of the one who made it. Among the mass of evidence which Padilla's advocate succeeded in collecting, is the testimony of a Captain Sebastiano Gorini, who chanced at this time (it is not known for what cause, to be imprisoned in the same place, and who often spoke with a servant belonging to the Judge of the Tribunal, placed as guard over these unhappy men: the following is his deposition: " This servant said to me at the very moment the Barber had been brought back from the examination, your lordship does not perhaps know that the Barber has just now told me, that in his examination he has given out the name of Signor Don Giovanni, son of the Signor Castellano! Hearing this I was quite confounded, and said, is this really true? and the servant returned that it was true; but that it was also true that the Barber protested he had never spoken to a single Spaniard, and that, even were Signor Don Giovanni pointed out, he should not recognise him. And the servant added, I asked him, therefore, why he had denounced this gentleman! And he replied, that he had denounced him because he had heard speak of him, and that he employed in his replies every thing he had heard or what came to his lips." This deposition—and Heaven be praised for it!—was of great service to Padilla; but can we believe that the judges who had placed, or allowed to be placed, as guard over Mora a servant of this judge, so active and full of so investigating a spirit, should only have learned long after, and then accidentally, from the mouth of a witness these words which carried

such conviction with them—words spoken without hope—a moment after that strange declaration which had been extorted from him by torture?

Amongst other things, this relation between the Milanese barber and the Spanish cavalier appeared strange even to the judges themselves; and they therefore demanded who had been the mediator: at first Mora declared that it had been one of Padilla's dependents, and described his appearance and dress; but pressed to name him, he said, "Don Pietro di Saragozza." This, at least, was an imaginary personage.

The judges instituted—after Mora's execution, of course—the most minute and persevering search regarding this individual. Soldiers and officers, comprising the Commandant himself, Don Francesco de Vargas, who had succeeded to Padilla's father; but no one had ever heard speak of such a person. Finally, they discovered in the prison of the Podestà, a Pietro Verdeno, a native of Saragozza, accused of theft. This man was examined, and he declared that at this time he was at Naples; he was put to the torture, and still maintained his statement; there was no more said about this Don Pietro di Saragozza.

Ever pursued by fresh questions, Mora added, that he had afterwards made the proposal to the Commissioner, who had also received money, "from I know not whom." And assuredly he did not know; but the judges insisted upon knowing. The miserable man was put to the torture, and named a certain individual who was unhappily only too real a person, a certain Giulio Sanguinetti, a banker—"the first per-

son who occurred to the man who fabricated through pain.” *

Piazza, who had all along denied receiving money, interrogated anew, immediately said, ‘yes.’ (The reader will perhaps recollect better than the judges, that when the Commissioner’s house was searched, there was found even less money than at Mora’s—that is to say none at all). He therefore said that he had received his money from a banker; and the judges not having named Sanguinetti, Piazza named another—Girolamo Turcone. Both bankers, and their various agents, were arrested, examined, and put to the torture; but standing firm to their denial, they were finally released.

On the 21st of July were communicated to Piazza and Mora the acts which followed the renewal of the trial, and another term of two days was granted them for their defence. Both one and the other selected this time an advocate, probably by the counsel of those who had been officially assigned them.

On the 23d of the same month Padilla was arrested; that is, according to the statement in his defence, he was informed by the Commissary-general of Cavalry, that by order of Spinola, he should deliver himself up as prisoner in the Castle of Pomate, which he did. His father—as we learn from the defence itself—solicited, by means of his lieutenant and secretary, the suspension of Piazza’s and Mora’s sentence until after they had been confronted with Don Giovanni. He received as reply, that “the sentence could not be suspended, because the people were clamorous——;” here then is named this “*civium ardor præ-*

* *Quorum capita, fingenti inter dolores gemitusque occurrere.* Liv. xxiv.2.

jubentium:" the only time they were able, without confessing a horrible and contemptible deference, for now the question was the execution of a judgment, not the judgment itself. But was it only at this moment that the people began to clamour? or was it now that the judges first paid attention to their cries? "But in any case the Signor Don Francesco must not lose courage, for infamous people, such as are these two criminals, cannot by their words injure the reputation of the Signor Don Giovanni." And yet the words of these two 'infamous' men were of authority as regarded each other! And the judges had so often pronounced them 'truth!' "And thus," concludes the deposition of the said secretary, "we returned to the Signor Castellano, and related to him what had passed; he said no more, but remained mortally afflicted. His despair was so profound, that he died a few days afterwards."

The infernal sentence decreed that, placed upon a car, the doomed men should be conducted to the place of execution; that they should be gashed with a hot iron, during their progress; have the right hand struck off before Mora's shop; have their bones broken on the wheel; be bound alive to the wheel, and raised from the ground, and at the end of six hours be put to death; that their bodies should be burnt, and their ashes be cast into the river; that the house of Mora should be demolished; and that upon its site, a column should be erected, called the Column of Infamy; and that all building upon this spot should be for ever prohibited. And if anything could increase our horror, indignation, and compassion, it is seeing these unhappy men, after such a sentence has been signified

to them, confirming, and even augmenting their confessions, and this owing to the very same causes which had in the first instance extorted them. The hope, not yet extinct within them, of escaping death, and such a fearful death! the violence of tortures, which, in comparison with this monstrous sentence, almost appear light, but present and irresistible, caused them to repeat their former falsehoods, and name fresh persons. Thus, by means of their impunity and torture, these judges succeeded, not only in causing two innocent men to perish by a fearful death, but caused them, as far as lay in their power, to die guilty.

In Padilla's defence, we discover—and it is a consolation—that they declared their own innocence, and the innocence of others, as soon as they were assured that they must die, and that they would have no longer to reply. The captain whom we have just quoted, affirmed that, being near the chapel in which Piazza had been placed, he heard the poor man making a noise, and saying that he was assassinated under a promise of impunity, and that he refused to listen to two Capuchins, who came desirous of preparing him for death. “And for myself,” he adds, “I perceived that Piazza had hope that his sentence might be reversed—and I therefore hastened to him, thinking it an act of charity to dispose him to die resigned to the will of God, in which endeavours I may truly say I succeeded; for the fathers did not go the right way to work, as I did, in assuring him that I had never seen or even heard of the Senate ever having revoked such a sentence, especially after condemnation. In short, I spoke so much that he grew calm; and then, heaving

some sighs, said, how he had had the misfortune to accuse so many innocent persons." He, as well as Mora, drew up, with the assistance of the two Capuchins, a formal retractation of all the accusations which hope or pain had extorted from them. They both supported this lingering execution, or rather this series and variety of executions, with a fortitude which, in men so often vanquished by the fear of death and suffering; in men who died victims, not in some noble cause, but through a miserable accident, through an absurd error, and through weak and cowardly lies; in men who, becoming infamous, would remain obscure, and who could only oppose to the public execration the sentiment of innocence, which they had so often denied; in men who had families, wives, and children; with a fortitude, we say, which in such men it would be impossible to understand, did we not know of resignation—this gift, which in the midst of the injustice of men, manifests the justice of God, and which, in the midst of chastisements, be they what they may, is the gage not alone of pardon, but of reward. Both one and the other never ceased affirming until the very last, until they were bound upon the wheel, that they accepted this death in expiation of those crimes which they had in truth committed. To accept what they could not refuse! These words may appear senseless to those who in things regard solely the material effect; but they are full of a clear and profound sense to him who considers, or who, without considering, comprehends that in a determination that which is the most difficult, and, in reality, the most important, the conviction of the mind; and the submission of the will is equally difficult, equally im-

portant, whether the effect depend or not upon ~~the~~
—whether it consist in the consent or choice.

As we have before observed, we shall but ~~slight~~
mention the other trials, and merely treat of ~~such~~
relate to the trial of Padilla, that is, to the ~~trial~~
which from the importance of the accusation, ~~is~~
principal one, and which as well as from its ~~nature~~
and issue becomes the touchstone for all the ~~others~~

CHAPTER VI.

THE two scissar-grinders, unfortunately accused by Piazza, and afterwards by Mora, had been imprisoned since the 27th of June; but had not been confronted with either one or the other, nor even examined, until after the execution of the sentence, which took place on the 1st of August. On the 11th, the father was examined; and the following day, being put to the torture upon the sole pretext of contradiction and improbability, he confessed or rather he invented a history, changing like Piazza the colouring of real circumstances. These men were like spiders, which attach their thread to something solid, and then work in the air. There was found upon him a phial containing an opiate given him, and also composed in his house by his friend Baruello; he said this was "a liquor to destroy people with;" an extract of toads and serpents, together with "certain powders, the ingredients of which I do not precisely know." Besides Baruello, he named as their accomplices certain individuals of their mutual acquaintance; and as the chief, Padilla. The judges would have liked to connect this history with that of the two men whom they had assassinated, and therefore demanded from him whether he had not received "ointments and money" from Piazza and Mora. If he had simply denied this, they would have applied torture; but this

he prevented by his singular reply: "No, that is not true; but should you subject me to this because I have denied this particular, I shall be strained to say that it is true, although it is not." They could now no longer, without too open a violation of all justice and humanity, essay a means, the necessity of which was so solemnly announced to them by his hand.

He was condemned to the same death. After the intimation of his sentence, being again put to torture, he accused another banker, together with several other individuals. In the chapel, and on the gibbet, he retracted every thing.

Piazza and Mora had also calumniated Gaspar. The confession of this scissar-grinder. He certainly confessed one fault, but the fault is confessed by himself at such a moment, and with such a sentiment, that the very fault appears a proof of his innocence, and of the rectitude of his whole life. In the midst of torture, in the very face of death, his words were more beautiful than those of a strong man, they were those of a martyr. Not having been able to render his calumniator, either of himself or others, the justice he deserved, he condemned him (we do not perceive under what pretext) as convicted; and after sentence was pronounced he was questioned, as usual, whether he were guilty of other crimes, and who were his accomplices in the crime for which he was condemned. To the first question, he replied, "I have committed neither this nor other crimes; I die, because once, when moved with anger, I gave one of my fellows a blow in the eye." To the second, he replied, "I have no accomplices, because I always attended to my own affairs."

.. if I have not done this deed, I can have no accom-
es.” Being menaced with torture, he said, “Your
lship may do what pleases you, I will never say
t I have done what I have not done; I do not wish
damn my soul; and it is better that here I should
dure three or four hours of torture, than go to hell,
ere I should suffer eternally.” Being put to the
ture, he exclaimed in the first moment, “Ah, Lord!
have done nothing; I am assassinated!” He then
ded, “These torments will soon cease; but in the
her world they will never cease.” The torture was
radually increased, until it reached the last stage,
nd together with the torture were repeated pressing
njunctions to speak the truth. He always replied,
“I have already spoken it; I wish to save my soul.
tell you that I will not burden my conscience; I have
lone nothing.”

We cannot here avoid reflecting that, had the same
sentiments inspired Piazza with the same constancy,
poor Mora would have remained tranquilly in his
shop, in the midst of his family; and that, like him,
this youth, more worthy of admiration than compas-
sion, and many other innocent people, would have
never even imagined the frightful fate they had
escaped. Even he himself, perhaps—who knows?
For certainly, to have condemned him, without an
avowal on his own part, upon such slight evidence,
and when, through default of others’ confession, the
crime itself was a mere conjecture, it would have
been necessary to violate still more openly, still more
audaciously, every principle of justice and every re-
gulation of law. At all events, they could not have
condemned him to a more monstrous death; at least

they would not have condemned him to suffer in the company with one whom, gazing upon, he must exclaim: "I have conducted him here! How many horrors were occasioned by weakness—what do I say—by the rage, the perfidy, of those who, regarding a calamity, as a defeat, the discovery of no criminal tempted this human weakness with an illegal and fraudulent promise."

We have already referred to the solemn act by which a similar promise was made to Baruello, and have also mentioned our intention of shewing the different case which the judges made out of it. Chiefly on this account we will briefly relate the story of this victim. Being vaguely accused, as we have seen, first by Piazza, as being an accomplice of Mora, after by Mora, as being an accomplice of Piazza, and then by both, as having received money for smearing the ointment composed by Mora of certain filth, and even worse (a circumstance which they commenced by denying); and also by Migliavacca, as having himself compounded an ointment of worse ingredients than filth; and lastly, being accused of all these things, as though they constituted one crime; he denied the charge, and bravely endured the torture.

Whilst his cause was pending, a priest (who was another of the witnesses cited by Padilla) besought by one of Baruello's relatives, recommended him to the attention of an attorney of the Senate; who later came and informed the priest that the object of his solicitude was sentenced to death, with all the horrible accompaniments which we have seen; telling him, however, at the same time, that "the Senate counted upon procuring impunity from his Excellency." He

also charged the priest to go to Baruello, and endeavour to persuade him to speak the truth; "since the Senate desires to know the cause of this business, and imagines it may be learned from this man." After having condemned him; after these executions!

Barnello having heard the cruel intelligence and the proposition, said, "and they wish to do with me what they have done with the Commissioner!" The priest having said that the promise appeared to him sincere, Baruello commenced his history—that a certain person (who was dead) had conducted him to the Barber's house; and that this person, raising a curtain which concealed an opening in the wall, had introduced him into a large hall where were many persons assembled, among whom was Padilla. To the priest, who felt himself under no obligation to discover criminals, this appeared a strange thing; and he even interrupted Baruello, warning him not to lose body and soul together, and then withdrew. Baruello accepted the impunity, improved his story, and appearing the 11th of September before his judges, related to them that a fencing-master (who was unfortunately alive) had told him that there was a good opportunity of getting rich by doing Padilla a service; that he then conducted him to the square of the castle, where Padilla himself and several others made their appearance; that Padilla had immediately invited him to become one of those who anointed under his orders, and thus avenge the insults offered to Don Gonzalo de Cordova, upon his departure from Milan; and that he had given him money, and a small vase of this deadly ointment. To say that in this story—the commencement of which we have merely given—there

were many improbabilities, would not be justice; it was one tissue of extravagance, as he has been able to see from this single specimen. The probabilities the judges themselves discovered certain contradictions moreover; for which, after various questions, followed by replies which confused the business still more, the judges said "that he should explain himself better, if they were to draw any certainty from his words." Whether as a stratagem, or whether he was seized with a fit of madness, for which there was too sufficient cause, he began to tremble, to weep about, to cry for help, and to throw himself upon the floor, endeavouring to conceal himself under a table. He was conjured, soothed, and stimulated, to speak. He commenced another history, in which he introduced enchanters and circles, magical words, and a devil, whom he had acknowledged as his master. For our own purpose it will be sufficient to observe, that he declared fresh things; and that, among others, he retracted all he had said about avenging the dishonour shewn to Don Gonzalo, and asserted instead that Padilla's object was to render himself master of Mexico, and that he had promised to make him one of his officers. After many questions, the examination was closed, if it merit the name of examination; after the three others followed, in which, being told that such an assertion was improbable, and that another was incredible, he replied, that in fact the first time he had not spoken the truth, or given any kind of explanation whatsoever; and the deposition of Migliavacca, in which he was accused of having distributed ointments to a number of people, of whom he had not spoken in his

confession; being represented to him not less than five times, he always replied that it was not true, and the judges always passed on to something else. The reader who recollects how, at the first improbability which the judges imagined they discovered in Piazza's deposition, they threatened to revoke the impunity; and how at the first addition which he made to this deposition, at the first fact alleged against him by Mora, and denied by him, they in reality revoked it, "for not having spoken the entire truth as he had promised;" the reader will now perceive, still more clearly, if that be needful, wherefore they would rather deceive the Governor than request authority from him, and wherefore they had made a promise in words, and of words to this Piazza, who should be the first sacrifice offered up to the popular fury and to their own.

Do we, perhaps, mean to imply that it would have been just to maintain this impunity? No, God preserve us from such a thing! That would have been the same as saying that this man had given true evidence. We would merely observe that it was as violently withdrawn as it had been illegally promised, and that one was the consequence of the other. For the rest we can only repeat that they could do no just thing in that course which they had chosen; they could only retrace their steps whilst they had yet time.

The judges had no more right to sell this impunity to Piazza—setting aside the want of power—than a robber has the right to give a traveller his life: it is his duty to leave it him.

What might have been the issue of this promise given to Baruello, we cannot tell, for the unfortunate

man died of the plague on the 18th of September that is, the day after he had with great effort borne the being confronted with the fencing-master Carlo Vedano. But when he felt his end approaching he said to a gaoler who attended him, and was another of the witnesses cited by Padilla, "do me the favour to tell the Signor Podestà, that all those whom I have accused, I have accused wrongfully; and is it true that I have received money from the Signor Castellano,—I feel that I shall die of this sickness. I pray those whom I have wrongfully accused to pardon me; and I beseech you to tell the Signor Podestà, even if I recover. And I hasten immediately," pursues the witness, "to report to the Signor Podestà all that Baruello had told me."

This retractation might avail something to Padilla but Vedano, who until then had been alone accused by Baruello, was horribly tortured that same day. He was, however, able to resist the torture; and was still in prison, of course—until the middle of January in the following year. He was the only one among these unhappy victims who was in reality acquainted with Padilla, for he had twice fenced with him in the castle; and it was this very circumstance, one sees that had suggested to Baruello the idea of making him play a part in his fable. Baruello had not, however, accused him of having either compounded, spread, or distributed deadly ointments; but only being the mediator between Padilla and himself. The judges could not therefore condemn as convicted a man who was thus accused, without injury to the cause of the Signor; and it was most probably this circumstance which saved him. He was not yet

questioned until after the first examination of Padilla, and Padilla's acquittal brought with it his.

Padilla was conducted from the castle of Pizzighetone, whither he had been transferred, to Milan, on the 10th of January in the year 1631, and placed in the prison of the Minister of Justice. He was examined the same day. And were a proof required that these very judges were able to question without deceit, without lies and without violence, without discovering improbabilities where there were none, contenting themselves with reasonable answers, and admitting, even in a cause of poisonous anointing, that an accused might speak the truth, even when saying 'no,' we should find it in this examination, and other proofs also in the two succeeding examinations to which Padilla was subjected.

The only two prisoners who had asserted that they had conferred with him, were Mora and Baruello; they had even indicated the time; the former in a somewhat vague manner, the latter more precisely. The judges therefore demanded from Padilla at what time he had gone to the camp? he mentioned the day; they asked from what place he had departed for the camp? from Milan, he replied; whether he had ever returned to Milan during that interval?' 'only once, and then for a single day.' This did not agree with a single epoch invented by the unfortunate men. Upon this they told him, without threats, and with a friendly manner, that he should reflect whether he had not chanced to be at Milan at such and such an epoch; each time he replied 'no,' always referring to his former replies. They next came to persons and places. They ask him whether he had known a cer-

tain bombardier named Fontana, he was the father-in-law, and Barnello had named him as one of those present at the first conference; he replied 'yes;' whether he knew Vedano, 'yes.' Whether he knew the *Vedra de' Cittadini*, the hostel of the 'Six Robbers;' it was to this that Mora affirmed Padilla had come, conducted Don Pietro di Saragonza, to propose the poisoning of Milan to him. He replied that he did not know either the street or hostel, except by name. He was then asked whether he knew this Don Pietro di Saragonza; him he did not know; it was not possible that he should. They questioned him regarding two individuals dressed in the French style, and regarding another dressed as a priest; people whom Barnello described as having come with Padilla to the conference in the Castle-square; he did not know of what they spoke.

In the second examination, which was the second which took place in January, they questioned him concerning Mora, Migliavacca, and Barnello, concerning the interviews he had had with them, the money that had been given, and the promises that had been made; but without as yet speaking to him of the plot to which all this referred. He replied that he had never had to do with these people, that he had never even heard them named; and he repeated that he had never chanced to be in Milan at those different epochs.

After more than three months, consumed in research from which, as might be expected, not the slightest advantage was gained, the Senate decreed that Padilla should be accused of the crime alleged against him.

that the proceedings of the trial should be made known to him, and assigned him a certain time in which to prepare his defence. In execution of this order, he was summoned to a new and final examination on the 22d of May. After many plain questions, regarding all the principal points of accusation, to which he always replied with 'no,' and for the most part dryly enough, they came to the recital of the fact, that is, they frankly mentioned this foolish piece of news to him, or rather these two foolish pieces of news. The first, that he, the accused, had told the barber Mora, "near the hostel of the Six Robbers, that he should make an ointment—and that he should take this ointment and go and smear the walls with it;" and that as recompense he had given him many pistoles; and that Don Pietro di Saragozza, by his order, had afterwards sent the said Barber to fetch other money from such and such bankers. But this story is reasonable in comparison with the other; which is, that he, the accused, having sent for Stefano Baruello to the Castle-square, had said to him, "Good day, Signor Baruello; it is a long time that I have desired to speak with you," and after some other compliments, had given him five-and-twenty Venetian ducats, and a vase of ointment, saying that this was some of the ointment made in Milan, but that it was not perfect, and that he should "take lizards, and toads, and white wine," and put them altogether in a pot, and "let them boil very slowly, in such a way that these animals should become mad before they died." That a priest, whom Baruello had declared to be a Frenchman, had accompanied the accused, and had caused "a being in the form of a man, and

in the dress of a pantaloon," to appear, and that Baruello acknowledge him as his master; that Baruello had asked who this was; and that he had replied that this was the devil; and that another time, when he was accused, had given other money to Baruello, and promised to make him a lieutenant in his company, and should serve him well.

At this point, Verri (so true is it, that a systematic intent can cause even the most noble minds to see things in a false light, even after they have once seen them clearly), Verri thus concludes: "Such is the series of facts deposed against the son of the Commandant, which, although denied by all the persons examined (excepting the three unfortunate men, Messrs. Piazza and Baruello, who sacrificed their truth to the violence of torture), served as a foundation to the most shameful accusation." Now the reader knows, and Verri has himself related, that of these three two had been induced to lie through the flattery of impunity, not through the violence of torture.

Having heard this most unworthy nonsense, Patrucco said, "Of all the men whom your lordship has named to me, I only know Fontana and Tegone (the latter was the surname of Vedano); and all that your lordship has read to me from the proceedings of the trial, as evidence given by these people, is the greatest falsity and lie that has ever been heard in this world; neither is it to be believed that a cavalier such as I should either perpetrate or imagine anything so infamous as this; and I pray God and the Holy Mother, if these things are true, to confound me at this moment; and I hope that, with the aid of God, I shall be enabled to expose the falsity of these men, and that it will be proclaimed to the world."

The judges replied, for the sake of formality, and without pertinacity, that he should resolve to speak the truth; and signified to him the decree of the Senate, which proclaimed him guilty of having compounded and distributed poisonous ointment, and having enlisted accomplices. "I am greatly astonished," returned he, "that the Senate should have come to so grave a resolution, seeing and discovering that this is a mere imposture and falsehood, directed not only against me, but against justice itself. How could a man of my rank, who has spent his life in the service of his Majesty and in defence of his country, descended from men who have lived the same lives, have done or thought of such a thing which would have covered both them and himself with such disgrace and infamy?"

It is delightful to hear indignant innocence speak such language; but it fills us with horror to recall that innocence which before these same men became terrified, confounded, desperate, a liar and a calumniator; and innocence also bold, constant, and sincere, yet equally condemned.

Padilla was acquitted; when, we do not precisely know, but certainly not until a year afterwards, for his last defence was presented in May 1632. And assuredly this acquittal was no favour; but did not the judges perceive that by this very circumstance they themselves declared all their former condemnations unjust? Acknowledging that Padilla had never given money as payment to these imagined anointers, did they remember the men whom they had condemned for having received money from him to that intent? Did they recollect having said to Mora,

“ that this reason was far more probable than that of procuring for himself a sale of his electuary, and more employment for the Commissioner?” Did they recollect how, in the following examination, when he persisted in denying the crime, they had said, “ that nevertheless, it was the truth?” That having again denied it when confronted with Piazza, they had put him to the torture to make him confess it, and again put him to the torture, that this first confession which they had extorted from him might become valid? That, from that time forth, the whole proceedings turned upon this supposition? That it had been expressly understood in all the examinations, confirmed in all the replies, as the cause which was finally discovered and recognised as the truth, as the true and sole cause of Piazza’s crime, of Mora’s, and of the crime of all the other condemned men? That the edict published, a few days after the execution of Piazza and Mora, by command of the High Chancellor, with the advice of the Senate, said that “ they had reached such a height of impiety as to betray for money their own country?” And seeing at length this cause vanish (for in the trial no mention is ever made of other money than Padilla’s), did these judges reflect that no other arguments remained but confessions, obtained in a way which they only knew too well, and retracted between the sacrament and death? confessions before in contradiction with each other, now discovered to be in contradiction with the facts? Acquitting as innocent the chief, would they acknowledge that they had condemned as his accomplices innocent men?

Quite the contrary, judging at least from public

appearances; the monument and the sentence remained; the fathers who had been condemned by these sentences were branded as infamous; the children who had been thus horribly rendered orphans, still remained legally dispossessed of their property. And as to all that passed in these judges' hearts, who can know what new arguments, a voluntary error, already predisposed against evidence, may not be able to resist? an error, I say, become more dear and precious than ever, since at first to have acknowledged these men as innocent would have deprived the judges of an opportunity of passing sentence of death, now it would have been a declaration of their own fearful guilt; and the frauds and violations of the law, which they knew they had committed, but which they wished to believe justified by the discovery of impious and dreadful malefactors, would not alone have reappeared in their naked and ugly aspect of fraud and violation of the law, but would also appear as the producers of a horrible murder. Finally, an error supported and fortified by an ever powerful authority, although often a fallacious, and in this instance a strangely deceitful authority, since in great part it was only based upon that of the judges themselves; that is to say, upon the authority of the people, who proclaimed them wise, zealous, and courageous avengers, and defenders of their country.

The Column of Infamy was pulled down in 1778; and in 1803, a house was built upon the site; upon this occasion was also demolished the gallery from whence Catarina Rosa, "*L'infernal dea che alla veletta stava*," sent forth the cry of the informer, so that there no longer remains anything which recalls either the

frightful effects or the miserable cause. The corner house of the *Vedra de' Cittadini*, on the left hand as you come from the *Corso di Porta Ticinese*, occupies the site of poor Mora's house.

We will now see, if the reader have the goodness to follow us in this last research, how, after exercising such influence over the courts of justice, the rash judgment of this woman appears through them to have influenced the writers of that and of the following age.

CHAPTER VII.

FROM among the crowd of contemporary writers, we will select the only one who is not obscure, and who has not always spoken according to the general belief, Giuseppe Ripamonti, whom we have already so often quoted. He might be given as a curious example of the tyranny which dominant opinion often exercises over the words of those whose minds it has not been able to subject. He not only never expressly denies the guilt of these unfortunate men (and until the time of Verri, no one ever did in any work destined for the public), but he seems more than once inclined expressly to affirm it. Speaking of Piazza's first examination, he refers to "his malice," and "to the penetration of the judges;" he says that Piazza, "by his many contradictions, proclaimed his crime at the very moment he wished to deny it:" he said equally of Mora that, "as long as he could resist the torture, he denied, according to the practice of all criminals; but finally he related the thing as it was (*exposuit omnia cum fide*)."

Yet at the same time he seeks to make the contrary understood, by suggesting timidly and hurriedly some doubt regarding the most important circumstances; by a single word directing the reader's reflection to a just conclusion; by putting in the mouth of some accused persons, words fitter to demonstrate his innocence than any he himself could have em-

ployed; by the compassion he exhibits, and which is only felt for the innocent. Speaking of the body discovered in Mora's house, he said, "what principally made a great impression, was a thing, it is perhaps innocent and accidental; but, nevertheless filthy, a something that might appear like what is sought after." Speaking of the first time the prisoners were confronted, he remarks that Mora, "invoking the justice of God against a fraud, against a malicious invention, against a snare into which they might catch an innocent victim to fall." He calls him, "a poor father of a family, who unknowingly drew down on his unlucky head infamy and the ruin of both himself and his children." All the reflections which we have just made, and those which we may yet make regarding the manifest contradiction between the acquittal of Padilla and the condemnation of the others, Bismonti gives in a few words: "the anointers were punished notwithstanding this." How much does the adverb, or it may be conjunction, express! "He adds, "the city would have been filled with horror at the monstrous nature of the execution, had it not appeared even less horrible than the crime."

But the place in which he most clearly expresses his sentiment, is where he protests that he will not express it. Having recounted various cases of persons who had fallen under suspicion as anointers, without any trials having resulted; "I find myself," says he, "about to take a dangerous and difficult step. I am obliged to declare whether, beside these men who have been thus unjustly taken for anointers, I believe that there have been anointers in reality. The difficulty does not proceed from the uncertainty of the

thing, but from my not being left at liberty to do that which the reader has a right to expect from every author, express his own sentiments. If I were to say that there existed none of these malefactors that without reason people have attributed to human malice, what in reality was a chastisement from God, immediately I should be assailed with cries, that the history was impious, and that the author had no respect for a solemn judgment. So deeply is the contrary opinion rooted into the mind; and the credulous people and the proud nobility are ready to defend it as something they consider the most dear and sacred. To commence war with so many adversaries would be a difficult and a useless undertaking; and therefore without denying or affirming, or inclining more to one side than another, I will confine myself to merely relating the opinion of others." It will be asked, perhaps, whether it would not have been a more reasonable, as well as a much easier thing, not to have spoken at all; but remember, that Ripamonti was historiographer of the city, that is, one of those men who in certain cases may at the same time be commanded to, and prohibited from, writing history.

Another historiographer, but in a wider field, Batista Nani, a Venetian, who in this case could have been influenced by no personal consideration to relate what was false, was nevertheless induced to believe it from the authority of an inscription and manuscript. "Although truly," says he, "the imagination of the people, excited by terror, pictured to itself many things, at all events this crime was discovered and punished, and there are still to be seen at Milan the inscriptions and memorials which mark

the demolished edifices, where these monsters were accustomed to congregate." * Whoever, without knowing more of this writer, should measure his judgment by this reasoning, would very much deceive himself. In various important embassies, and in various offices at home, he had enjoyed much opportunity of gaining knowledge of men and things: in his history he gives us proof of no common sense. But the judgments of criminals and the poor, which but in small numbers, are not regarded as a proper subject for history; therefore it is not to be wondered at that Nani, speaking incidentally of this fact, should not have considered it worthy of much attention. If any one mentioned to him another column, and an inscription at Milan, as proof of a defeat endured by the Venetians, a defeat as true as the crime of "the monsters," most certainly Nani would have laughed.

It causes more astonishment and more displeasure to discover the same argument and the same reproach in the writings of a man much more celebrated and with great reason. Muratori, in his "Treatise upon the Government of the Plague," after having noticed various histories of this description, says "that no case is more renowned than that of Milan where, during the contagion of 1630, many persons were arrested, who confessed to so enormous a crime and were severely judged. There still exists—and I myself have seen it—a melancholy memorial of the crime, in the Column of Infamy, erected upon the spot where stood the house of these inhuman wretches. Therefore is great attention requisite that such ex-

* Nani's *Historia Veneta*, part I. lib. viii. Venetia, Lovisa, 1734 p. 473.

crable scenes do not again renew themselves." But what changes, although it does not weaken, our displeasure, is to observe that Muratori's persuasion was not after all as resolute as his words, for discoursing—and one perceives that it is in reality this which occupies him—upon the horrible evils which may arise from imagining and believing such things without foundation, he says, "they went so far as to imprison people, and by means of torture extort from their lips the confession of crimes which they, perhaps, had never committed, to make of them, at last, a miserable slaughter upon the public gibbet." Does it not seem as though he would allude to our unfortunate friends? And what leads us to believe this still more is, that he immediately proceeds with the words which we have quoted elsewhere, but which are so short that we will transcribe them again: "I have met with well-informed people in Milan, who had received authentic traditions from their ancestors, and who yet were not persuaded of the reality of these poisoners, which were reported to have been spread through the city, and caused so much noise during the plague of 1630." One cannot do less than believe that Muratori rather regards these things as absurd fables, than as "execrable scenes," as he calls them, and what is still graver, as innocent murdered men those whom he calls "inhuman wretches." This is one of those sad and only too frequent cases in which men, anything but inclined to lie, wishing to deprive a pernicious error of its strength, and on the other hand fearing to do worse by combating it from the front, have thought it good to commence by falsehood, so as to be able later to insinuate the truth.

After Muratori, we meet with a writer more renowned than he as an historian, and—what in a work of this nature seems as though it should render his judgment more worthy of remark than that of any other man—a lawyer, and, as he says of himself, “more of a lawyer than a politician,” Pietro Gianone. We will not, however, report his judgment, for the reason that we have just given it; his opinion is the same as that of Nani, which the reader has already seen, and which Gianone has copied word for word this time quoting his author at the bottom of his pages.

I say this time, because the habit he has of copying Nani, without giving his authority, is a thing worth notice, if, as I believe, it has never before been noticed.

Who does not know Parini's fragment upon the Column of Infamy? But who would not be astonished were it not mentioned in this place?

Here then are the few lines of this fragment, which the celebrated poet only too faithfully expresses the opinion expressed by the multitude and the inscription:—

Amidst vile houses and amid mean ruins
I see the ignoble square before me open.
There lifts its head a solitary column
Mid sterile grass and stones and things impure,
Where no man penetrates, because from thence
The guardian genius of the Lombard cities
Cries, with a warning voice—Away! away!
O ye good citizens! lest the unhappy soil
Infect you with its infamy.*

* “*Procul hinc, procul ergo, boni cives, ne vos infelix infamæ commaculet.*”—Conclusion of the inscription placed upon the Column.

Was this really the opinion of Parini? We know not; for his having expressed this sentiment in such positive manner, but in verse, would be no argument; for it was then a received maxim that poets possessed the privilege of profiting by all belief, whether true or false, were they adapted to produce either strong or agreeable impressions. The privilege! To maintain and strengthen men in error a privilege! But to this it may be replied, that such an inconvenience could not arise, since no one believes that poets speak truth. To this we can answer nothing; yet it may appear strange that poets should be contented with this permission and this motive.

At length Pietro Verri makes his appearance, the first after a hundred and forty-seven years who saw and dared to say who had been the true executioners; the first who dared to beseech, for the innocent men who had been thus barbarously murdered and thus stupidly abhorred, a sentiment of compassion, compassion which was all the more due to them as it came so late. But what happened? His "Observations," written in 1777, were not published until 1804, together with his other works, edited and unedited, in the collection of "Classical Italian writers upon Political Economy." The editor assigns the reason of this delay in the "Notices" prefixed to the above-mentioned work. "It has been thought," says he, "that the reputation of the Senate might be stained by this ancient disgrace." An effort only too frequent in those times, produced by that *esprit de corps*, by which every one sooner than concede that his predecessors might have done wrong, would take upon himself follies which he himself had not committed.

At the present day a similar spirit would not find occasion to extend itself so far into the past, since almost throughout the whole continent of Europe, societies are of a much more recent date, with the exception of a very small number, and with the exception of one above all others, which not having been instituted by men, can neither be abolished nor lose its power. Besides which, this spirit is now combated and weakened more than ever by the spirit of individuality; the "I" thinks itself too rich to borrow from the "we." And in this instance, it is a remedy: God preserve us from saying that it is so in every instance.

At all events Pietro Verri was not a man to sacrifice to a consideration of this kind, the manifestation of a truth, rendered important by the general belief in error, and still more so, by the end which he intended this truth should serve; but there was one circumstance which rendered his scruple just. The father of this illustrious writer was President of the Senate. Thus it has happened more than once, that good reasons have aided bad ones, and that by means of both one and the other, a truth, after having long delayed to appear, has been obliged still to remain concealed another long space of time.

THE END.

